RUSSIAN (Div I)
Chair: Professor Janneke van de Stadt

Professors: J. van de Stadt and J. Cassiday; Assistant Professor: O. Kim; Visiting Assistant Professor: P. Orte; Bolin Dissertation Fellow: Kamal Abdul Kariem; Teaching Associate: Aisulu Beken

On leave: O. Kim

LANGUAGE STUDY
The department provides language instruction to enable students to acquire all five linguistic skills: understanding, speaking, reading, writing, and culture. Russian 101-W88-102 covers the basics of Russian grammar. Russian 103 through 202 offer additional instruction in grammar and vocabulary acquisition, and provide extensive practice in reading and conversation.

STUDY ABROAD
The department strongly encourages students who want fluency in Russian to spend a semester or year studying in Russia or one of the former Soviet republics. Students generally apply to one of several approved foreign study programs. Russian 104 or the equivalent and junior standing are normally prerequisite for study abroad.

FAQ
Students MUST contact departments/programs BEFORE assuming study away credit will be granted toward the major or concentration.

Can your department or program typically pre-approve courses for major/concentration credit?
No, generally not until after a student returns and can provide course material for review (e.g. completed work such as exams, portfolios, lab reports and the like).

What criteria will typically be used/required to determine whether a student may receive major/concentration credit for a course taken while on study away?
In addition to course title and description, we always have a conversation with our students about the actual work they completed since sometimes syllabi are vague, or not followed with complete thoroughness.

Does your department/program place restrictions on the number of major/concentration credits that a student might earn through study away?
Yes, four courses.

Does your department/program place restrictions on the types of courses that can be awarded credit towards your major?
No.

Are there specific major requirements that cannot be fulfilled while on study away?
No, the only candidate for this would be the Senior Seminar, and it has never been an issue.

Are there specific major requirements in your department/program that students should be particularly aware of when weighing study away options? (Some examples might include a required course that is always taught in one semester, laboratory requirements.)
No.

Give examples in which students thought or assumed that courses taken away would count toward the major or concentration and then learned they wouldn’t:
None to date.

LITERATURE AND CULTURE IN TRANSLATION
The department regularly offers courses on Russian literature, culture, and politics in English for those students who have little or no knowledge of Russian, but who wish to become acquainted with Russian literary, cultural, and social history.

THE CERTIFICATE IN RUSSIAN
To enhance a student’s educational and professional profiles, the Certificate in Russian offers a useful tool for using the language in a wide variety of disciplines. The sequence of language and culture courses is designed to supplement a student’s major at Williams by enabling the student to expand their knowledge in a related field.

Students who enter Williams with previous training in Russian may substitute more advanced courses for all the 100-level courses; they can also be exempted from up to two of the required courses. Thus, in order to earn a certificate a student must take no fewer than five courses (including three
courses in Russian) after enrolling at Williams. The student must achieve proficiency at the level of a B in RUSS 251 or the equivalent.

Required Courses

101
102
103
104
one additional course conducted in Russian

Elective Courses

at least one course on Russian cultural history
at least one course on Russian intellectual, political, or social history, or post-Soviet economics

THE MAJOR

The Russian major offers students an interdisciplinary approach to the intellectual and cultural history of Russia and the former Soviet republics. Students complete the major by combining courses in Russian language and literature with courses in history, political science, music, economics, and art. The major requires a minimum of ten courses of which at least six must be conducted in Russian, at least two must be at the 300-level, and one at the 400-level. In addition, students may take up to four related courses offered by other departments and taught in English.

Examples of appropriate courses in other departments are:

- HIST 241 Imperial Russia
- SOC 248 Post-Soviet Paradoxes
- HIST 337 After Stalin: Soviet History
- PSCI 286 Russian Politics and Foreign Policy under Vladimir Putin

Students selecting the major must typically complete Russian 104 or 152 (or the equivalent) by the end of the junior year. Majors will normally be expected to take the 400-level seminar offered in their senior year, even if they have previously taken another version of it. Russian majors may receive major credit for summer language study (in consultation with the department) and for as many as four courses taken during study abroad.

THE DEGREE WITH HONORS IN RUSSIAN

At the beginning of the second semester of the senior year, students may nominate themselves to candidacy for the degree with honors. By the end of the junior year at the latest, however, they will have established in consultation with the department their qualifications for embarking on the project, the pattern of study to be followed, and the standards of performance.

Students earn a degree with honors by submitting a senior thesis (493-W31-494) of honors quality.

RUSS 101  (F)  Elementary Russian I

An introduction to contemporary standard Russian, this course provides opportunities to acquire basic proficiency in all five language skills--listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, and culture--through immersion, intensive use of authentic materials, and a strong emphasis on the spoken word in all class activities. Greater emphasis is placed on writing in the second semester. For students who already know some Russian, consultation with the department is required before registering for any Russian language course in the sequence 101 through 252.

Class Format: this class is hyphenated with RUSS 102 and meets five times a week

Requirements/Evaluation: active class participation, completion of all assignments, regular summative exercises, written and oral final exercises

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: first-and second-year students; students expressing an interest in the Russian major or certificate; students who need to learn Russian for research purposes

Expected Class Size: 10
RUSS 102 (S) Elementary Russian II
An introduction to contemporary standard Russian, this course provides opportunities to acquire basic proficiency in all five language skills-listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, and culture-through immersion, intensive use of authentic materials, and a strong emphasis on the spoken word in all class activities. Greater emphasis is placed on writing in this semester. For students who already know some Russian, consultation with the department is required before registering for any Russian language course in the sequence 101 through 203.

Requirements/Evaluation: active class participation, completion of all assignments, quizzes, tests, and a final exam
Prerequisites: RUSS 101 or permission of the instructor
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: students expressing an interest in the Russian major or certificate and students who need to learn Russian for research purposes
Expected Class Size: 10
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Unit Notes: credit granted only if both semesters (RUSS 101 and 102) are taken
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2024
SEM Section: 01 M-F 10:00 am - 10:50 am Julie A. Cassiday

RUSS 103 (F) Intermediate Russian I
This course develops all five skills--listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, and culture--for students who have completed at least one year of college-level Russian. Coursework includes a systematic review of Russian grammar, as well as an examination of a variety of authentic materials from Russian and Russophone cultures, current events, and daily life.

Requirements/Evaluation: completion of daily homework assignments, oral assessments, summative exercises, active class participation. This course meets three times per week with the instructor and once per week with the course TA.
Prerequisites: students who passed RUSS102 or its equivalent
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: Students who major or are planning to major in Russian
Expected Class Size: 10
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2023
LEC Section: 01 MWF 11:00 am - 11:50 am Janneke van de Stadt

RUSS 104 (S) Intermediate Russian
This course continues to develop all five skills--listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, and culture--for students who have completed at least three semesters of college-level Russian. Coursework includes the ongoing study of Russian grammar, especially of increasing complexity, as well as an examination of a variety of authentic materials from Russian and Russophone cultures, current events, and daily life. Significant attention
will be devoted to vocabulary expansion. Students who complete the yearlong sequence of RUSS 103 and RUSS 104 should be well prepared to undertake study abroad in Russia and are encouraged to do so.

Class Format: the class meets four hours a week: three with the professor and the fourth with the Russian Teaching Associate (time to be arranged)

Requirements/Evaluation: Daily class participation and preparation, completion of all assignments and exercises, in and out of class. This course meets three times per week with the instructor and once per week with the course TA.

Prerequisites: RUSS 103 or the equivalent; consult with instructor if unsure

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: Russian Majors and language certificate seekers, then students of Russian language, literature, history or culture.

Expected Class Size: 5-10

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2024

SEM Section: 01 MWF 11:00 am - 11:50 am Peter A. Orte

RUSS 151 (F) Continuing Russian I

This course develops all five skills--listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, and culture--for students who have completed at least one year of college-level Russian. Coursework includes a systematic review of Russian grammar, as well as an examination of a variety of authentic materials from Russian and Soviet culture, current events, and daily life. Intermediate students will concentrate on expanding their vocabulary, while more advanced students will focus on reading and writing about unabridged texts in Russian. Students who complete the yearlong sequence of RUSS 151 and RUSS 152 should be well prepared to undertake study abroad in Russia and are encouraged to do so. Each year this course is custom-designed to meet the needs of those students who enroll, so that both intermediate and advanced students can benefit from taking RUSS 151 and/or RUSS 152 more than once, which may be done with the permission of the instructor.

Requirements/Evaluation: active class participation, completion of all assignments and summative exercises

Prerequisites: completion of at least one year of college-level Russian (RUSS 101-102) or the equivalent, or permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: Russian majors and certificate seekers

Expected Class Size: 4-6

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

RUSS 152 (S) Continuing Russian II

This course develops all five skills--listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, and culture--for students who have completed at least one year of college-level Russian. Coursework includes a systematic review of Russian grammar, as well as an examination of a variety of authentic materials from Russian and Soviet culture, current events, and daily life. Intermediate students will concentrate on expanding their vocabulary, while more advanced students will focus on reading and writing about unabridged texts in Russian. Students who complete the yearlong sequence of RUSS 151 and RUSS 152 should be well prepared to undertake study abroad in Russia and are encouraged to do so. Each year this course is custom-designed to meet the needs of those students who enroll, so that both intermediate and advanced students can benefit from taking RUSS 151 and/or RUSS 152 more than once, which may be done with the permission of the instructor.

Class Format: the class meets four hours a week, three with the professor and the fourth with the Russian Teaching Associate (time to be arranged)

Requirements/Evaluation: active class participation, completion of all assignments, quizzes, and a final exam

Prerequisites: RUSS 151 or permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: none

Enrollment Preferences: none

Expected Class Size: 4-6
RUSS 201  (F)  Advanced Russian I
This course continues to develop all five skills--conversation, listening comprehension, reading, culture, and writing--for students who have completed at least two years of college-level Russian or the equivalent. Coursework includes the study of higher-level Russian grammar, as well as an examination of a variety of materials-print and other media-from Russian and Russophone cultures, current events, history, and the arts.
Class Format: Class meets with the instructor two or three times per week, and once a week with the Teaching Associate at a time and place TBA.
Requirements/Evaluation: regular attendance, active class participation, completion of all daily homework as well regular written and oral assignments both in and out of class
Prerequisites: Russian 104 or the equivalent, consult with the instructor if unsure
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: Russian majors and language certificate seekers; students of Russian language, history, and culture
Expected Class Size: 5
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2023
SEM Section: 01  MWF 12:00 pm - 12:50 pm  Julie A. Cassiday

RUSS 202  (S)  Advanced Russian II
This course continues to develop all five skills--conversation, listening comprehension, reading, culture, and writing--for students who have completed at least two years of college-level Russian or the equivalent. Coursework includes the study of higher-level Russian grammar, as well as an examination of a variety of materials-print and other media-from Russian and Russophone cultures, current events, history, and the arts.
Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, oral and written assignments both in and out of class. This course meets three times per week with the instructor and once per week with the course TA
Prerequisites: RUSS 201 or permission of the instructor
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: Russian majors and students of Russian language, history, and culture
Expected Class Size: 5
Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2024
SEM Section: 01  MWF 12:00 pm - 12:50 pm  Peter A. Orte

RUSS 203  (F)  Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature in Translation
Cross-listings: COMP 203 RUSS 203
Primary Cross-listing
Description: Nineteenth Century Russian literature is well known for its exploration of extreme states of consciousness. Because of this, it also contains some of the most compelling diagnoses of the illnesses and malaise of the modern condition: alienation, loss of meaning, suffering in face of the abuse of power, and the destructiveness of hyperrationality. Covering Russian literature's first modern treatments of madness up to the Silver Age, we will take this theme as a path to explore 19 th century Russian literature as a whole. We will read works by Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and others in order to better understand the Russian response to modernity and cast our glance along with them into the depths of the human soul.
Requirements/Evaluation: Daily reading and participation 20%; 1 paper illustrating the practice of close reading 1-2 pp. 10%; paper 2: paper
Comparing two readings 3-4 pp. 15%; paper 3, comparing two readings or a creative assignment "re-writing" a Russian classic 4-5 pp. 20%; Final paper + presentation (essay on a critical work or story that we did not read or an independent creative assignment): 5-6 pp. 25%; Course Test or final essay: 10%.

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 25

Enrollment Preferences: RUSS or COMP

Expected Class Size: 20

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

COMP 203(D1) RUSS 203(D1)

Attributes: GBST Russian + Eurasian Studies Electives

Prerequisites: none, open to all students

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: declared or prospective Russian or Comparative Literature majors, Russian Certificate seekers, Global Studies concentrators

Expected Class Size: 15

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

GBST 204(D1) COMP 204(D1) RUSS 204(D1)

Attributes: GBST Russian + Eurasian Studies Electives

Not offered current academic year

RUSS 204 (S) To See the Past: Russian and Soviet Cinema on History

This course surveys Soviet and Russian cultural history of the 20th- and 21st-centuries through the history of the cinematic medium. We will watch and analyze key films of this period--films by Eisenstein, Vertov, Tarkovsky, Muratova, Balabanov, Zviagintsev, and Fedorchenko among others--from a double perspective. On the one hand, we will study the cultural and historical contexts of the Soviet Union and Russia; on the other hand, we will learn the formal and stylistic aspects of the cinematic medium as it developed historically (from silent, to sound, to color, to digital etc.). From this double perspective, we will try to answer a larger question that underlies this course: What kind of historical thinking can we learn through cinema as a medium? In other words, we will take cinema neither simply as a direct reflection of state ideology nor as pure aesthetic form or entertainment for the masses. Rather, we will approach the films of this period as audio-visual texts that are rich in historical content and require our informed and attentive interpretation.

Requirements/Evaluation: For each class you'll watch 1 or 2 film(s) and read typically 1 article under 20 pages. You will submit short viewing response before each class. Additionally, there will be short viewing or creative assignments to familiarize students with formal aspects of film. Evaluation will be based on participation, one presentation, short sequence analysis, and final paper or video essay

Prerequisites: none, open to all students

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: declared or prospective Russian or Comparative Literature majors, Russian Certificate seekers, Global Studies concentrators

Expected Class Size: 15

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

GBST 204(D1) COMP 204(D1) RUSS 204(D1)

Attributes: GBST Russian + Eurasian Studies Electives

Not offered current academic year

RUSS 217 (S) Indigeneity Today: Comparative Indigenous Identities in the US and Russia (DPE) (WS)

Indigenous movements for land, rights, and cultural preservation have spread to and originated in all corners of the world. However, the global nature
of these movements at times obscures ways of being Indigenous in differing contexts. This course analyzes Indigeneity in both the United States and Russia today. Through reading and analyzing ethnography, theory, and literature, it focuses on Indigenous peoples in a comparative context. Rather than prioritizing concern with Indigenous peoples emerging from the US, it attempts to demonstrate what Indigeneity has been in both the United States and Russia and what it is and means today. It asks the following questions: what is Indigeneity and who is Indigenous; how is Indigenous identity constructed and by whom; and what convergences and divergences exist in Indigeneity between the US and Russia or for that matter in other contexts? To help answer these questions, in this course we will grapple with Indigeneity as a social category and other social formations, especially ethnicity, nationality, and race. Topics include: Indigeneity and the State, Revitalization and Resurgence, Indigenous People and Nature Protection, and Hemispheric and Global Indigeneities.

Requirements/Evaluation: 10 posts to the course Glow discussion page, 3 times leading class discussion on the assigned readings, 1 short presentation, 1 extended portfolio project with regular shorter and longer writing submissions, and 1 final paper and final presentation (as the final part of the portfolio).
Prerequisites: None
Enrollment Limit: 16
Enrollment Preferences: Majors and certificate-seekers in Russian, then majors in Anthropology and Sociology, and then Global Studies concentrators
Expected Class Size: 12-15
Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1) (DPE) (WS)
This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
GBST 219(D2) ANTH 217(D2) RUSS 217(D1)

Writing Skills Notes: This course has the following assignments: Weekly post to the Glow discussion page, 1 short presentation, 1 extended project with regular writing submissions, 1 final paper and final presentation. For the extended project, we will have instructor feedback for all project assignments. In instructor feedback, comprehension of the material and the content of the writing, improvement in writing style and clarity, and development of voice will be discussed. There will also be peer feedback/review.

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: In the course, students will learn about Indigeneity as a context-specific social formation. It understands Indigeneity as a category of difference with past and present importance. We will read about, discuss, and write about Indigeneity as a social category, along with other social categories it arose alongside (such as race, ethnicity, and nationality), and how it has been mobilized by both those who identify as Indigenous and by those who designate others as Indigenous.

Spring 2024
SEM Section: 01 TF 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Kamal A. Kariem

RUSS 218  (S) Extreme Persuasions: The Far Right in the United States and Russia  (DPE) (WS)
Cross-listings: AMST 219 RUSS 218 WGSS 217
Secondary Cross-listing

The purpose of this course is to explore the unexpected recent confluence of the American and Russian far-right movements, among advocates for authoritarianism in both countries who have traditionally understood the ‘other’ superpower to be an implacable enemy. How have nationalist movements in the United States come to see the Russian Federation as a vanguard for ‘whiteness’ and traditional masculinity in European identity, overturning the perception of Russia as a racial Other that was prevalent among American conservatives during the Cold War? What are the affinities between the imperial and openly patriarchal aspirations of Putinism and the goals of American religious Reconstructionism, with its interpretation of the Confederacy as a God-given model for racial separatism and gender complementarianism? We will discuss repressive historical legacies and homophobia in both countries, devoting particular attention to debates about protest art and the removal of monuments, and to movements that situate themselves in opposition to neoliberal forms of ethno-nationalism.

Requirements/Evaluation: On average, there will be 100 pages of reading per week. Over the course of the semester, students will be required to view three films, which will be discussed in class. Class participation counts for 25% of the course grade; each of the first three response papers, 15%; the term paper, 25%; the in-class presentation of the term paper, 5%.
Prerequisites: None
Enrollment Limit: 19
Enrollment Preferences: Majors and concentrators in AMST, Russian, and Women's and Gender Studies.

Expected Class Size: 19

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (DPE) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

AMST 219(D2) RUSS 218(D2) WGSS 217(D2)

Writing Skills Notes: The written work is comprised of three response papers (5-7 pages each), a rough draft of the term paper (8-10 pages) that will be ungraded but extensively commented upon, and the term paper itself (10-15 pages). Each student to discuss their writing strategies prior to the deadlines for the essay assignments. For the essays, students may choose from among a range of prompts, or design a topic of their own.

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: Students will use the assigned readings as points of departure for analyzing and responding to traditionalist configurations of gender and ethno-nationalism in the United States and the Russian Federation. Particular attention will be devoted to the proliferation of different conceptions of power and privilege in both countries, and to ways in which a parsing of them may facilitate an engagement with the arguments of far right movements while retaining the concept of social justice.

Attributes: AMST Critical and Cultural Theory Electives

Not offered current academic year

RUSS 219 (F) Cults of Personality (WS)

Cross-listings: RUSS 219 COMP 215

Primary Cross-listing

First uttered by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in 1956, the phrase "cult of personality" was formulated to discredit the hero-worship that accompanied Joseph Stalin's iron-fisted rule of the Soviet Union. Since then, the phrase has gained currency as a condemnation of a variety of seemingly all-powerful leaders in oppressive political regimes, including China's Mao Zedong, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, and the ruling Kim family in North Korea. In this course, we will examine the phenomenon of the cult of personality from a variety of perspectives, beginning with the cult surrounding Stalin and ending with that of Vladimir Putin. Our course material will encompass scholarship from multiple disciplines, including history, sociology, political science, cultural and media studies, as well as artistic expression typically labeled propaganda in literature, the visual arts, and film. Although our course will begin in the Soviet Union and end in contemporary Russia, we will explore how the cult of personality has been adapted and updated for different cultural and political purposes in fascist Germany and Spain, China, Iran, North Korea, and Cuba. All readings will be in English, and all films will have English subtitles.

Requirements/Evaluation: completion of weekly reading and writing assignments, as well as active engagement during tutorial sessions

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: first-year students

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

RUSS 219(D1) COMP 215(D1)

Writing Skills Notes: Students will be writing papers (5-6 pages) every other week and receiving detailed feedback on their writing with the expectation that they will identify areas in need of improvement and work on these throughout the semester. The course will also require that students write one paper together with their tutorial partner and that they rewrite two different papers, one at midterm and the other at the end of the term.

Not offered current academic year

RUSS 251 (F) Continuing Russian I

The same course as RUSS 151 but for students at the advanced level. See RUSS 151/152 for full course description.

Class Format: Class meets four hours a week, three with the professor and the fourth with the Russian Teaching Associate (time to be arranged).

Requirements/Evaluation: active class participation, completion of all assignments, quizzes, and a final exam

Prerequisites: RUSS 152 or permission of instructor
Enrollment Limit: 10
Enrollment Preferences: Russian majors and certificate seekers
Expected Class Size: 4-6
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

RUSS 252 (S) Continuing Russian II

The same course as RUSS 152 but for students at the advanced level. See RUSS 151/152 for full course description.

Class Format: the class meets four hours a week, three with the professor and the fourth with the Russian Teaching Associate (time to be arranged)

Requirements/Evaluation: active class participation, completion of all assignments, quizzes, and a final exam
Prerequisites: RUSS 251 or permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: none
Expected Class Size: 4-6
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

RUSS 305 (F) Dostoevsky and the Meaning of Life

Cross-listings: RUSS 305 COMP 305

Primary Cross-listing

This course surveys the works of the great Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, whose oeuvre represents a life-long quest to uncover the meaning of life. Readings include Dostoevsky's major novels, Crime and Punishment, The Idiot, and The Brothers Karamazov, as well as several shorter works, including Notes from Underground. We will also examine Dostoevsky's journalism, so that we understand how he answers life's most troubling questions in the social and political context of his day, as well as what role artistic representation plays in these answers. All readings will be in English.

Requirements/Evaluation: willingness and ability to complete lengthy reading assignments, active class participation, two short papers, and final synthetic assignment
Prerequisites: none, open to all students

Enrollment Limit: 40
Enrollment Preferences: Russian and Comp Lit majors, as well as those seeking the Russian Certificate
Expected Class Size: 15
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
RUSS 305(D1) COMP 305(D1)

Not offered current academic year

RUSS 306 (S) Tolstoy and the Meaning of Life

Cross-listings: COMP 306 RUSS 306

Primary Cross-listing

This course examines the works of the great Russian writer Lev Tolstoy, whose stories and novels represent a life-long quest to uncover the meaning of life. Readings include Tolstoy's two major novels, War and Peace and Anna Karenina, as well as several shorter works, such as The Death of Ivan Ilych and Hadji Murad. We will also examine Tolstoy's aesthetic and didactic writing so that we understand precisely how Tolstoy answers life's most
troubling questions, as well as what role artistic representation plays in these answers. All readings will be in English.

Requirements/Evaluation: timely completion of all reading assignments, active participation in class discussions, 2 short papers, and a final project

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 50

Enrollment Preferences: RUSS and COMP majors, then students studying Russian

Expected Class Size: 15

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

COMP 306(D1) RUSS 306(D1)

Attributes: GBST Russian + Eurasian Studies Electives

Spring 2024

SEM Section: 01  MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm  Julie A. Cassiday

RUSS 331  (F)  The Brothers Karamazov  (WS)

Cross-listings: COMP 331 RUSS 331 ENGL 371

Primary Cross-listing

Widely hailed as one of the greatest novels ever written, Dostoevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov contains a series of enigmas, not the least of which is precisely who murdered the Karamazov father. In addition to exploring the shared guilt of all four of the brothers Karamazov in the crime of patricide, Dostoevsky poses the most probing questions of his day: Are families tied together merely by blood or by deeper spiritual bonds? Is religious faith possible in an age of reason, science, and technology? Can man's earthly laws ever carry out divine justice? Is humanity prepared to bear the burden of responsibility that comes with freedom? This tutorial will spend an entire semester exploring Dostoevsky's masterwork, and we will read a variety of secondary sources alongside The Brothers Karamazov, including history, philosophy, and literary theory. Our goal will be to understand Dostoevsky's answers to these so-called “accursed questions” through the unique artistic form of The Brothers Karamazov.

Requirements/Evaluation: completion of weekly reading and writing assignments, as well as active engagement during tutorial sessions

Prerequisites: at least one 200-level literature class

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: students majoring or considering a major in Russian, Comparative Literature, or English

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)  (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

COMP 331(D1) RUSS 331(D1) ENGL 371(D1)

Writing Skills Notes: Students will write six 6-page papers in the course of the semester and received detailed feedback on their writing and argumentation for each paper, which they will be expected to incorporate into subsequent papers.

Attributes: JLST Interdepartmental Electives

Fall 2023

TUT Section: T1  TBA  Julie A. Cassiday

RUSS 345  (S)  Bagging the Monsters : Tolstoy's Other Prose

War and Peace and Anna Karenina, which Henry James famously described as "baggy monsters," are works that are immediately identified with Leo Tolstoy, a giant of nineteenth-century Russian literature. But Tolstoy wrote so much more! From short works of adult fiction, to stories for children, pedagogical essays, political tracts, aesthetic treatises, and philosophical musings. He produced variously and prodigiously throughout his life and that's not even counting his fascinating diaries and personal correspondence. Our course readings will probe this exceptional variety with the goal of
understanding the scope of Tolstoy's thinking in greater depth. All readings and discussion will be in Russian.

Requirements/Evaluation: Active and substantive class participation, leading discussion, weekly short writing assignments, and 1-2 longer writing pieces of 4-5 pages.

Prerequisites: Three years of college Russian or the equivalent. Students who have not taken Russian language at Williams must consult the instructor.

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: Russian majors and certificate seekers, then comparative literature majors.

Expected Class Size: 5

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

RUSS 346 (S) The Nineteenth-Century Povest'

Among the genres that made nineteenth-century Russian literature famous, perhaps the most elusive is the povest'. Neither short story nor novella, the term povest' describes a type of short fiction, which any author aspiring to literary greatness in nineteenth-century Russia felt obliged to take on. This course surveys representative povesti by Russian writers from Karamazin to Chekhov, offering a survey of nineteenth-century Russian literature through the lens of its short fiction. Along the way, we will read povesti by Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy. All works will be read in the Russian original.

Requirements/Evaluation: completion of all reading assignments; two oral presentations in class; two short papers; a final project presented in class

Prerequisites: RUSS 202 or the equivalent, or permission of the instructor.

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: Russian majors and those pursuing the Russian certificate.

Expected Class Size: 5

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

RUSS 348 (S) Altering States: Post-Soviet Paradoxes of Identity and Difference (DPE) (WS)

Cross-listings: RUSS 348 SOC 348 GBST 348

Secondary Cross-listing

Critics and apologists of Soviet-style socialism alike agree that the Soviet ideology was deeply egalitarian. Putting aside for a moment the very reasonable doubts about how justified this perception actually was, it is still worth asking, how did people who lived in the world in which differences in rank, class, gender or ethnicity were not supposed to matter, make sense of their postsocialist condition, one in which new forms of difference emerged, and old ones assumed greater prominence? And how do these encounters with difference impact current events, such as the war Russia is currently waging on Ukraine, or the persistent tensions between East and West Germans? This tutorial will examine new dilemmas through ethnographic studies and documentary films that aim to capture in real time the process of articulating and grappling with newly discovered divides. We will focus especially closely on Russia, but will also read studies on East Germany, Bulgaria, Poland, and Ukraine. This course fulfills the DPE requirement by exploring comparatively the ways in which people in different countries made sense of the social, cultural and political heterogeneity of the postsocialist condition.

Requirements/Evaluation: 5-page paper every other week, written comments on the partner's paper in alternate weeks

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: Anthropology, Sociology, and Russian majors

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1) (DPE) (WS)
This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
RUSS 348(D1) SOC 348(D2) GBST 348(D2)

Writing Skills Notes: This is a tutorial course, with plenty of opportunities to work on writing and argumentation. Tutorial papers receive written feedback from both the instructor and the tutorial partner, and are workshopped during the tutorial meetings.

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: Students will learn to identify and interrogate processes of social differentiation and exclusion as they take place across Russia and Eastern Europe. We will also train ourselves to identify parallels, as well as differences, between responses to the social and economic uncertainty ushered by the fall of socialism, and the discontents triggered by similar conditions closer to home.

Attributes: GBST Russian + Eurasian Studies Electives

Spring 2024
TUT Section: T1    TBA     Olga Shevchenko

RUSS 401  (F)  What is the Intelligentsia?  (DPE)
The word “intelligentsia” in its modern meaning first appeared in Russia in the middle of the 19th century, though the concept has a rather long pre-history. The Russian intelligentsia as a social class took shape among the educated raznochintsy and aristocratic proponents of Western ideas who had been freed from obligatory state service. These conditions provided them with limited freedom and independence, and also gave them the opportunity to devote their time to culture, creation, and science. This state of affairs was favorable for the development of the distinguishing characteristic of the intelligentsia: critical thought, both in relation to authority and to oneself. In this course we will study the history, ethic and tradition of the intelligentsia from the times of the tsars until the present day. In particular, we will explore the following questions: what is the difference between being educated and belonging to the intelligentsia? How does the intelligentsia relate to the history and tradition of socialism? How is the intelligentsia connected with humanism? What is the fate of the intelligentsia in an industrial or totalitarian society? And what role does this tradition play today? In order to answer these questions, we will read authentic historical texts and scholarly literature, watch films and listen to lectures by the foremost specialists on the subject. Of course, we will also work on perfecting your knowledge of the Russian language.

Requirements/Evaluation: Daily work (reading, preparing questions for discussion) 25%; weekly 1-2 page short written assignments (responses to open-ended questions about the daily readings) 25%; 2 short 10 minute presentations (on two illustrious works or figures) 25%; 1 final project, longer researched presentation 10-15 minutes 25%.

Prerequisites: Three years of Russian or instructor's consent.

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: RUSS or COMP

Expected Class Size: 5-10

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1) (DPE)

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: This course will be devoted to historical examples of people who were often persecuted for their political affiliation, their class, or their critical stance in an environment that rewarded servility and conformity. It will also explore the stories of the non-Russian intelligentsia in the Soviet Union, the discrimination and terror that they faced, as well as the principled, humanistic ethic that they espoused during periods of national conflict.

Fall 2023
SEM Section: 01    TR 11:20 am - 12:35 pm     Peter A. Orte

RUSS 493  (F)  Senior Thesis: Russian
Russian senior thesis; this is part of a full-year thesis (493-494).

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2023
HON Section: 01    TBA     Gail M. Newman
RUSS 494 (S) Senior Thesis: Russian
Russian senior thesis; this is part of a full-year thesis (493-494).
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2024
HON Section: 01 TBA Gail M. Newman

RUSS 497 (F) Independent Study: Russian
Russian independent study.
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2023
IND Section: 01 TBA Gail M. Newman

RUSS 498 (S) Independent Study: Russian
Russian independent study.
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2024
IND Section: 01 TBA Gail M. Newman