Department of Russian

Professor: Hodge (Chair)
Associate Professor: Weiner
Lecturer: Epsteyn
Visiting Lecturer: Rouland

Since its founding in the 1940s by Vladimir Nabokov, the Russian Department has dedicated itself to excellence in literary scholarship and undergraduate teaching. Our faculty members specialize in different areas of Russian language and literature and incorporate a broad range of cultural material—history, music, and visual art—into their courses. Numerous activities both inside and outside the classroom are designed to enrich students’ appreciation of the achievements and fascinating traditions of Russian civilization. At the same time, we give our students critical skills that will serve them outside the Russian context.

Goals for the Major

• Be able to speak, read, write and understand Russian very well
• Be a close and attentive reader of Russian literary texts
• Be able to write a persuasive argument in both English and Russian
• Have a good grasp of the history of Russian literature from 1800 to the present
• Possess a broad understanding of important aspects of Russian culture, including film, fine arts, music, history, social customs, folk beliefs, and popular culture

RUSS 101 Elementary Russian I
Epstein, Hodge
Introduction to Russian grammar through oral, written, and reading exercises; special emphasis on oral expression. Four periods.
Prerequisite: None
Distribution: None
Semester: Fall, Wintersession
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 102 Elementary Russian II
Epstein, Weiner
Continued studies in Russian grammar through oral, written, and reading exercises; special emphasis on oral expression; multimedia computer exercises. Four periods.
Prerequisite: 101 or equivalent
Distribution: None
Semester: Spring
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 201 Intermediate Russian I
Epsteyn
Conversation, composition, reading, music, comprehensive review of grammar; special emphasis on speaking and writing idiomatic Russian. Students learn and perform a play in Russian in the course of the semester. Four periods.
Prerequisite: 102 or equivalent
Distribution: Language and Literature
Semester: Fall
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 202 Intermediate Russian II
Epsteyn
Conversation, composition, reading, popular music, continuation of grammar review; special emphasis on speaking and writing idiomatic Russian. Students read unadapted short stories by Pushkin and Zamiatin and view classic films such as Briliantovskia ruka. Four periods.
Prerequisite: 201 or equivalent
Distribution: Language and Literature
Semester: Spring
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 203W/303W Russian in Moscow
Epsteyn
NOT OFFERED IN 2010-11. This course is offered as an immersion experience, designed to improve students’ oral proficiency in Russian while introducing them to the cultural treasures of Russia’s capital. Mornings students study language with instructors at the Russian State University for the Humanities. Afternoons and evenings they visit sites associated with Moscow’s great writers, art galleries and museums, attend plays, operas and concerts. This course may be taken as either 203W or, with additional assignments, 303W. Not offered every year. Subject to Dean’s Office approval.
Prerequisite: 203 or permission of the instructor; 303 or permission of the instructor. Application required.
Distribution: Language and Literature
Semester: Wintersession
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 250 Research or Individual Study
Prerequisite: Open by permission to qualified students.
Distribution: None
Semester: Fall, Spring
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 250H Research or Individual Study
Prerequisite: Open by permission to qualified students.
Distribution: None
Semester: Fall, Spring
Unit: 0.5

RUSS 251 The Nineteenth-Century Russian Classics: Passion, Pain, Perfection (in English)
Hodge
Survey of Russian fiction from the Age of Pushkin (1820s–1830s) to Tolstoy’s mature work (1870s) focusing on the role of fiction in Russian history, contemporaneous critical reaction, literary movements in Russia, and echoes of Russian literary masterpieces in the other arts, especially film and music. Major works by Pushkin (Eugene Onegin, “The Queen of Spades”), Lermontov (A Hero of Our Time), Gogol (Dead Souls, “The Overcoat”), Pavlova (A Double Life), Turgenev (Fathers and Sons), Tolstoy (Anna Karenina), and Dostoevsky (Crime and Punishment) will be read. Taught in English. Two periods.
Prerequisite: None
Distribution: Language and Literature
Semester: Fall
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 255 Soviet and Russian Film (in English)
Rouland
The masterpieces of Russian film from the 1920s to the present day will be screened, analyzed, and discussed. Students will explore the thematic and stylistic developments created by the great Russian/Soviet filmmakers, including Eisenstein, Vertov, Tarkovsky and Mikhalkov. We will trace these films as works of art, examining the methods in which directors, like authors of novels and other literary genres, create a fictional world. Guest lecturers will comment on specific issues. Taught in English. Two periods.
Prerequisite: None
Distribution: Language and Literature
Semester: Fall
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 256 Witches and Devils: From Slavic Folklore and Fairy Tales to Modern Literature (in English)
NOT OFFERED IN 2010-11. Witches, devils, and vampires continue to populate the modern imagination, but where did such beliefs originate?

RUSS 272 Politically Correct: Ideology and the Nineteenth-Century Russian Novel (in English)
Hodge
NOT OFFERED IN 2010-11. Offered in 2011-12. Is there a “politically correct” set of responses for artists active under a repressive regime? We examine various Russian answers to this question through an intensive analysis of the great ideological novels at the center of Russia’s historic social debates from the 1840s to the 1860s. The tension between literary realism and political exigency will be explored in the fictional and critical works of Herzen, Turgenev, Chernyshevsky, Goncharov, Dobroliubov, Dostoevsky, and Pisarev. Representative works from the nonliterary arts will supplement reading and class discussion. Taught in English. Two periods.
Prerequisite: None
Distribution: Language and Literature
Semester: N/O
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 276 Fedor Dostoevsky: The Seer of Spirit (in English)
Rouland
Probably no writer has been so detested and adored, so demonized and deified, as Dostoevsky. This artist was such a visionary that he had to reinvent the novel in order to create a form suitable for his insights into the inner life and his prophecies about the outer. To this day readers are mystified, outraged, enchanted, but never unmoved, by Dostoevsky’s fiction, which some have tried to brand as “novel-tragedies,” “romantic realism,” “polyphonic novels,” and more. This course challenges students to enter the fray and explore the mysteries of Dostoevsky themselves through study of his major writings. Taught in English. Two periods.
Prerequisite: None
Distribution: Language and Literature
Semester: Fall
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 277 Lev Tolstoy: Russia’s Ecclesiast (in English)
Hodge
An odyssey through the fiction of the great Russian novelist and thinker, beginning with his early works (Seventeenth Stories) and focusing on War and Peace and Anna Karenina, though the major achievements of Tolstoy’s later period will also be included (A Confession, The Death of Ivan Ilich). Lectures and discussion will examine the masterful techniques Tolstoy employs in his epic explorations of human existence, from mundane detail to life-shattering cataclysm. Students are...
encouraged to have read the Maude translation of War and Peace (Norton Critical Edition) before the semester begins. Taught in English. Two periods.

Prerequisite: None  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: Spring  
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 286 Vladimir Nabokov (in English)  
Weiner  
NOT OFFERED IN 2010-11. An examination of the artistic legacy of the great novelist, critic, lepidopterist, and founder of the Wellesley College Russian Department. Nabokov's works have joined the canon of twentieth-century classics in both Russian and English literature. Students will explore Nabokov's English-language novels (Lolita, Pnin, Pale Fire) and the authorized English translations of his Russian works (The Defense, Despair, Invitation to a Beheading). Taught in English. Two periods.

Prerequisite: None  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: N/O  
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 291 Advanced Russian I  
Epsteyn  
Topic for 2010-11: Moscow. Students will become experts in one of the great overarching themes of Russian culture: Moscow. We will read and discuss texts, view films, listen to music, and compose essays on the theme of Russia's historic capital. The course includes study of grammar, vocabulary expansion with strong emphasis on oral proficiency and comprehension. At the end of the semester, each student will write a final paper and present to the class her own special research interest within the general investigation of Moscow's history, traditions, culture, and art. Taught in Russian. Three periods.

Prerequisite: 201-202 or the equivalent  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: Fall  
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 302 Advanced Russian II  
Epsteyn  
Topic for 2010-11: Russian Comedy Blockbusters. This course explores Soviet and Russian popular film classics loved by generations of viewers and that have become cultural symbols. We will study G. Aleksandrov's musicals of the 1930s; sentimental, detective and fantastic comedies by the masters of the genre, L. Gaigai, E. Riazanov, and G. Danelia in the 1950-80s; and post-Soviet crime comedies of the twenty-first century. We will attempt to determine the source of their enduring popularity and cult status through an examination of their aesthetics and of their social and political context. In Russian. Taught in Russian. Two periods.

Prerequisite: 301 or the equivalent  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: Spring  
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 333 Nineteenth-Century Russian Narrative Poetry: Tales of Mystery and Adventure (in Russian)  
Hodge  
NOT OFFERED IN 2010-11. Students will immerse themselves in the famous poetry of Derzhavin, Zhukovskii, Pushkin, Baratynskii, Krylov, Lermontov, and Nekrasov, analyzing ballads and verse tales devoted to the natural and the supernatural. Exotic "Oriental" cultures as well as high and low Russian culture serve as the backdrop for these dramatic verse narratives. Russian painting, music, and history will enrich our discussion of Russian Romanticism in the poetry.

Prerequisite or corequisite: 301 or 302  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: N/O. Offered in 2011-12.  
Unit: 0.5

RUSS 350 Research or Individual Study  
Prerequisite: Open by permission to qualified students.  
Distribution: None  
Semester: Fall, Spring  
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 350H Research or Individual Study  
Prerequisite: Open by permission to qualified students.  
Distribution: None  
Semester: Fall, Spring  
Unit: 0.5

RUSS 360 Senior Thesis Research  
Prerequisite: By permission of department. See Academic Distinctions.  
Distribution: None  
Semester: Fall, Spring  
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 370 Senior Thesis  
Prerequisite: 360 and permission of department.  
Distribution: None  
Semester: Fall, Spring  
Unit: 1.0

RUSS 376 Fedor Dostoevsky's Short Stories (in Russian)  
Rossland  
A Russian-language course designed to supplement 276 above, though 376 may be taken independently. Students will read and discuss, in Russian, major short works by Dostoevsky. One period.

Prerequisite or corequisite: 301 or 302  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: Fall  
Unit: 0.5

RUSS 377 Lev Tolstoy's Short Stories (in Russian)  
Hodge  
NOT OFFERED IN 2010-11. A Russian-language course designed to supplement 277 above, though 377 may be taken independently. Students will read and discuss, in Russian, major short works by Tolstoy. One period.

Prerequisite or corequisite: 301 or 302  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: N/O  
Unit: 0.5

RUSS 386 Vladimir Nabokov's Short Stories (in Russian)  
Weiner  
NOT OFFERED IN 2010-11. A Russian-language course designed to supplement 286 above, though 386 may be taken independently. Students will read and discuss, in Russian, major short works by Nabokov. One period.

Prerequisite or corequisite: 301 or 302  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: N/O  
Unit: 0.5

Courses for Credit Toward the Major

CPLT 284 Magical Realism

Department Information

Students majoring in Russian should consult the chair of the department early in their college career. For information on all facets of the Russian department, please visit www.welles-ley.edu/fac/ Russian/rusdept.html.

Students who cannot take RUSS 101 during the fall semester are strongly encouraged to take 101 during Wintersession; those interested in doing so should consult the chair early in the fall term. Advanced courses on Russian literature and culture are given in English translation at the 200 level; corresponding 300-level courses offer supplemental reading and discussion in Russian. Please refer to the descriptions for 376, 377, 378, and 386 above.

Requirements for the Major

A student majoring in Russian Language and Literature must take at least eight units in the department above RUSS 102, including:
1. language courses through 302;  
2. RUSS 251;  
3. two 200-level courses above 251; and  
4. one unit of 300-level coursework above 302 other than 350, 360, and 370.

RUSS 101 and 102 are counted toward the degree but not toward the Russian major. Thus, a student who begins with no knowledge of Russian would typically complete the following courses to major in Russian: 101 and 102, 201 and 202, 301 and 302; 251; two 200-level literature courses above 252; and one unit from 300-level literature courses.

Requirements for the Minor

A student minoring in Russian must take at least five units in the department above RUSS 102, at least one of which must be at the 300 level.

Honors

Students may graduate with honors in Russian either by writing a thesis or by taking comprehensive examinations. To be admitted to the thesis program, a student must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 in all work in the major field above the 100 level; the department may petition on her behalf if her GPA in the major is between 3.0 and 3.5. Students electing to take comprehensive examinations have a series of noncredit-bearing weekly tutorials on four special topics in Russian literature or culture (or both) over the entire course of their senior year; these topics must be chosen under the guidance of the chair and will normally be related to the coursework the student has completed; at the end of the student's final semester at Wellesley, she takes six written examinations over the course of one week: four on her special topics, and two language examinations. Students who wish to attempt either honors exercise should consult the chair early in the second semester of their junior year. See Academic Distinctions.
Study Abroad

Majors are encouraged to enroll in summer language programs to accelerate their progress in the language. Credit toward the major is normally given for approved summer or academic-year study at selected institutions in the U.S. and Russia. Major credit is also given for approved junior year abroad programs.

Russian Area Studies

Students interested in an interdepartmental major in Russian Area Studies are referred to the following and should visit the Russian Area Studies Web pages at www.wellesley.edu/Russian/RAS/rashome.html. Attention is called to Russian area studies courses in history, economics, political science, anthropology, and sociology.

Russian Area Studies

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAJOR

Director: Hodge (Russian)
Advisory Committee: Hodge (Russian), Kohl (Anthropology), Tumarkin (History), Weiner (Russian)

Sir Winston Churchill called Russia “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” The Russian Area Studies program explores Russia and the former Soviet Union, a vast region stretching from Poland to the Pacific Ocean, a land of extremes: anarchy and totalitarianism; supergrowth and stagnation; stability and dramatic volatility. The world’s largest producer of oil and gas, Russia has also given the world one of its most glorious literary and musical canons. The Russian Area Studies program is based on the premise that the region is best explored through an interdisciplinary study of its culture, history, politics, and language. The program prepares students for a range of careers, including work in government, business, academia, and the arts.

Goals for the Major

• an informed understanding of Russia’s and Eurasia’s place in today’s world, the goals and values espoused by its leadership, and the challenges the region faces
• a learned appreciation of the vast diversity of the broad Eurasian space, which for millennia has been inhabited by a multitude of peoples
• an understanding of how those peoples and cultures have interacted over time
• a familiarity with the basic structures and dynamics of Russian and Eurasian historical development, including the nature of autocracy, dictatorship and empire
• a proficiency in the Russian language sufficient for advanced study of its rich literary tradition
• a familiarity with enough classic Russian literature and other cultural works for an understanding of the major themes in Russian culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
• experience in critical reading, writing essays and oral communication
• a critical knowledge of methods used by scholars of literature, history and the social sciences

Courses for Credit Toward the Major

ANU 247 Societies and Cultures of Eurasia
ANTH 319 Nationalism, Politics, and the Use of the Remote Past
CPLT 284 Magical Realism
HIST 211 Bread and Salt: Introduction to Russian Civilization
HIST 246 Vikings, Icons, Mongols, and Tsars
HIST 247 Splendor and Serdum: Russia under the Romanovs
HIST 248 The Soviet Union: A Tragic Colossus
HIST 301 Seminar. Women of Russia: A Portrait Gallery
RUSS 251 The Nineteenth-Century Russian Classics: Passion, Pain, Perfection (in English)
RUSS 255 Soviet and Russian Film (in English)
RUSS 260 Witches and Devils: From Slavic Folklore and Fairy Tales to Modern Literature (in English)
RUSS 272 Politically Correct: Ideology and the Nineteenth-Century Russian Novel (in English)
RUSS 276 Fedor Dostoievsky: The Seer of Spirit (in English)
RUSS 277 Lev Tolstoy: Russia’s Ecclesiast (in English)

RAST 211/ANTH 211 Wintersession Program in the Republic of Georgia
Kohl (Anthropology)

NOT OFFERED IN 2010-11. Students travel to Tbilisi, Georgia, for Wintersession. They attend lectures in English at Tbilisi State University on Georgian history, language and culture and on contemporary political developments there and visit sites of historical interest in and around Tbilisi. They live with Georgian families and spend three weeks completing a self-designed internship with a local organization. Students may register for either RAST 211 or ANTH 211 and credit will be granted accordingly. Not offered every year. Subject to Dean’s Office approval.
Prerequisite: One course in Russian Area Studies or Anthropology. Application required.
Distribution: Social and Behavioral Analysis or Historical Studies
Semester: N/O
Unit: 0.5