Russian Language and Literature

Students who want to achieve a high level of proficiency in the Russian language and study Russian literature in depth can pursue a minor in Russian language and literature. The program offers elementary through third-year language courses and a number of courses on 19th- and 20th-century Russian literature (in translation) on a wide variety of topics. Students are strongly encouraged to study abroad.

An independent minor, Russian language and literature is administered by International and Area Studies. Students undertaking this minor are encouraged to consider a major in Eurasian studies (through IAS), comparative literature or history, all of which can be pursued with a focus on Russia and the former Soviet Union.

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Endowed Professors

Hillel Kieval
Gloria M. Goldstein Professor of Jewish History and Thought
PhD, Harvard University
(History; Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures)

James V. Wertsch
Marshall S. Snow Professor in Arts & Sciences
PhD, University of Chicago
(Anthropology, IAS)

Associate Professors

Max J. Okenfuss
PhD, Harvard University
(History)

Peter Schmelz
PhD, University of California, Berkeley
(Music)

Margit Tavits
PhD, University of Pittsburgh
(Political Science)

Assistant Professor

Anika Walke
PhD, University of California, Santa Cruz
(History)

Senior Lecturers

Mikhail Palatnik
MA equivalent, University of Chernovtsy
MA, Washington University

Nicole Svobodny
Assistant Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
PhD, Columbia University

Professor Emerita

Milica Banjanin
PhD, Washington University

Majors

There is no major in Russian language and literature. Students interested in Russian are encouraged to consider a major in Eurasian studies, comparative literature or history, all of which can be pursued with a focus on Russia and the former Soviet Union.

Minors

The Minor in Russian Language and Literature

Total units required: 20

Prerequisites:

Russ 101D Elementary Russian and Russ 102D Elementary Russian or the equivalent.

Requirements:

Russ 211D Intermediate Russian 4
Russ 212D Intermediate Russian 4
Russ 322D Third-year Russian 3
Russ 324D Third-year Russian 3
One 300- or 400-level course in Russian Literature 3
One elective course chosen either from an advanced Russian language and culture courses (Russian 404, 405, 431 or 432) OR from a Russian subject course taught in such departments as history, music or political science 3

Total units 20

Regulations:

• Students can earn up to 6 credits from a semester or summer study abroad program, with the approval of the Russian language and literature adviser.

• All advanced units must be unique to the Russian language and literature minor (i.e., not counted toward any other major or minor).

• Students must earn at least a B- in language courses in order to continue to the next level. They must also maintain at least a B- average in all courses taken to fulfill the minor
requirements. Students who do not meet this requirement may either repeat the course/s in question or earn at least a B- in an approved equivalent course or courses (either during the summer or in a study abroad program).

**Additional Information**

**Study Abroad:** Students are strongly encouraged to participate in a Washington University study abroad program in St. Petersburg, Russia. Semester options include both language and area studies programs. Although the summer program is language-focused only, there are programs available for students at any language level, including beginning. The university’s programs in St. Petersburg are conducted under the auspices of the Council for International Educational Exchange (CIEE), the longest running such program in Russia. Financial aid may be available for these programs through both Washington University and CIEE.

**Courses**

**Russian Language and Literature**

Visit https://courses.wustl.edu to view semester offerings for L39 Russ.

**L39 Russ 1001 Independent Study in Russian**
Prerequisite: Permission of an instructor/lecturer in Russian language and literature.
Credit 3 units.

**L39 Russ 101D Elementary Russian**
Interactive multimedia course designed to emphasize spoken language; includes the very latest video materials geared toward situations in contemporary Russian life. Also provides thorough understanding of fundamental grammar and develops reading and writing skills. Five class hours per week, plus an additional hour for conversation, review and testing.
Credit 5 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM, IS

**L39 Russ 102D Elementary Russian**
*Continuation of 101D.* Interactive multimedia course designed to emphasize spoken language; includes the very latest video materials geared toward situations in contemporary Russian life. Also provides thorough understanding of fundamental grammar and develops reading and writing skills. Five class hours per week, plus an additional hour for conversation, review and testing.
Credit 5 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM, IS

**L39 Russ 211D Intermediate Russian**
Designed to solidify students’ command of Russian grammar and advance conversational, reading and writing skills. Includes video materials produced in Russia and conveying an up-to-the-minute picture of contemporary Russian life.
Credit 4 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM, IS

**L39 Russ 212D Intermediate Russian**
*Continuation of 211D.* Completes comprehensive review of Russian grammar and further advances conversational, reading, writing and listening skills. Revised textbook with new audio and video materials that convey an up-to-the-minute picture of contemporary Russian life.
Credit 4 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM, IS

**L39 Russ 215C Introduction to Russian Civilization**
This course provides an overview of the main currents and developments in Russian culture and the arts from the earliest records to the present day. Exploring literary texts, film, music, architecture, the visual arts and popular culture, we discuss the self-identity of a people neither European nor Asian. Topics include the introduction of Orthodox Christianity, the “Tatar yoke,” reactions to the “Europeanization” of Russia, Soviet propaganda and post-Soviet everyday life. Does the Russian Federation of today represent a complete break with the past or a reemergence of certain cultural constants? Knowledge of Russian language not required. Freshmen welcome.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, CD A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Art: HUM BU: HUM, IS

**L39 Russ 315 Russian Music**
Same as Music 315
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S IQ: HUM EN: H

**L39 Russ 322D Third-year Russian**
Designed to develop students’ abilities in the contemporary spoken language. Conversational practice is combined with a review of grammatical concepts. Students also work with newspapers, read literary texts and write compositions.
Prerequisite: Russ 212D or equivalent.
Credit 3 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM, IS

**L39 Russ 324D Third-year Russian**
Designed to develop students’ abilities in the contemporary spoken language. Conversational practice is combined with a review of grammatical concepts. Students also work with newspapers, read literary texts and write compositions.
Prerequisite: Russ 322D or equivalent.
Credit 3 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM, IS

**L39 Russ 350C The 19th-century Russian Novel (WI)**
The 19th-century “realistic” novel elevated Russian literature to world literary significance. In this course we do close readings of three major Russian novels: Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Lev Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*. While we consider a variety of formal and thematic concerns, special emphasis is placed on the social context and on questions of Russian cultural identity. Readings and discussions are supplemented by critical articles and film. This is a writing-intensive course: workshops are required. All readings are in English translation. No prerequisites.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, SD, WI A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SD, WI Art: HUM BU: HUM

**L39 Russ 3559 Socialist and Secular? A Social History of the Soviet Union**
This class explores daily life and cultural developments in the Soviet Union, 1917 to 1999. Focusing on the everyday experience of Soviet citizens during these years, students learn about the effects of large-scale social and political transformation on the private lives of people. To explore daily life in the Soviet Union, this class uses a variety of sources and media, including...
scholarly analysis, contemporaneous portrayals, literary representations and films. Students receive a foundation in Soviet political, social and cultural history with deeper insights into select aspects of life in Soviet society.

Same as History 3559
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, CD, SD & A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SD BU: IS EN: H

L39 Russ 356 20th-century Russian History
In 2005, President Putin remarked that “Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the major geopolitical disaster of the century.” This course is a survey of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union from 1900 to the present. It covers the Imperial legacy, the several revolutions at the beginning of the century, Stalinism and de-Stalinization, retrenchment, Gorbachev’s reforms and collapse, and post-Soviet developments. Emphasis also is placed on the Soviet Union as a multi-ethnic, multicultural, multinational society, including relations with Chechnya and Ukraine, among other regions.

Same as History 356C
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, CD A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Art: HUM BU: IS

L39 Russ 3560 Russia and the West
Same as IPH 3560
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S IQ: HUM Art: HUM EN: H

L39 Russ 363 Russian Literature and Opera: Transpositions and Transgressions
Same as IAS 363
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, CD A&S IQ: HUM, LCD EN: H

L39 Russ 364 Anarchism: History, Theory and Praxis
This course analyzes the origins, historical trajectories and influence of anarchism from its classical period (1860s–1930s) until the present. It examines the major personalities, complex ideas, vexing controversies and diverse movements associated with anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, anarchist feminism, and poststructuralist anarchism. In doing so, it explores traditional anarchist concerns with state power, authority, social inequality, capitalism, nationalism, imperialism and militarism. It also analyzes anarchism’s conception of individual and collective liberation, mutual aid, workers’ organization, internationalism, direct democracy, education, women’s emancipation, sexual freedom and social ecology. Special attention is given to past and contemporary globalizing processes and their relation to the dissemination and reception of anarchism in the global South.

Same as IAS 364
Credit 3 units. A&S: SS A&S IQ: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L39 Russ 375 Topics in Russian Culture
Where is the borderline between “insanity” and the “visionary” experience? What is the correlation between madness and creativity? How does the Russian conception of madness compare to the Western one? In general, how do our cultural experiences shape our perception of madness? These are some of the questions we address in this course as we explore the role and representation of madness in Russian culture and literature.

Class discussions focus on close readings of formative works by Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gippius and Nijinsky. These primary literary texts are supplemented by critical and theoretical articles as well as film. This is a writing-intensive course: workshops are required. All readings are in English translation. No prerequisites.

Same as IAS 3750
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, CD, WI A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, WI BU: IS EN: H

L39 Russ 379 Russians Abroad: Literature, Migration, Identity
This course focuses on several waves of Russian emigration in the 20th century: the so-called “White Russian” emigration in the wake of the 1917 Revolution; the exile of dissidents and defectors from behind the “Iron Curtain”; Jewish emigration in the 1980s; and migrations and displacements after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Through our exploration of novels, short stories, poetry, memoirs, literary essays and film, we “travel” to China (Harbin), Turkey, Europe (Paris, Berlin, Prague), America (Mexico City, New York), Central Asia and Israel. We read works by Nabokov, Tsvetaeva, Bunin, Brodsky, Ulitskaya and others. Main topics discussed include memory, place, nostalgia, alienation, citizenship, and various constructs of personal and cultural identity. All assignments are in English and English translation. There are no prerequisites.

Same as IAS 379
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, CD A&S IQ: HUM, LCD BU: IS EN: H

L39 Russ 3880 The Russian Revolution
The Ten Days that Shook the World divided Russian, European and American society from 1917 until the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. This seminar examines major interpretations of the Russian Revolution through readings and a series of written exercises including a formal book review, a comparative essay and an analytical research paper.

Same as History 38R8
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, WI A&S IQ: HUM, WI BU: IS EN: H

L39 Russ 396 Comintern: The Communist International’s Global Impact
The Communist International was the third of the global left-wing organizations aimed to develop communist organizations around the globe to aid the development of a proletarian revolution. Begun in 1919, hosted in Moscow, and closely tied to the developing USSR, the Comintern hosted seven World Congresses and thirteen Enlarged Plenums before Stalin dissolved it in 1943. This course examines the history of the nearly 25 years of the Comintern, paying particular attention to engagement with countries outside of the Soviet sphere. Class texts provide a general historical overview and interrogate central ideological arguments/debates across several countries and political systems. Course materials look at the Comintern’s engagement with Fascism and the Spanish Civil War, ideas of Nationalism and Internationalism, and Self-Determination in the Colonial World. Class units are designed to highlight regional similarities and differences, taking a global approach to the study of Communism. Students gain an understanding of the global political complexities developing after World War I and leading to World War II. Reflecting on the critique of imperialist capitalism offered by the Comintern, students explore liberation struggles and ideological dictatorships around the globe.

Same as IAS 396
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S IQ: HUM EN: H
L39 Russ 404 Fourth-year Russian
Further develops students' abilities in all spheres of the language: speaking, listening, reading, writing. Vocabulary building, conversation practice and student compositions based on materials from the Russian mass media, contemporary films and readings in modern Russian literature. Prerequisite: three years of college Russian or equivalent.
Credit 3 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS

L39 Russ 405 Fourth-year Russian
Further develops students' abilities in all spheres of the language: speaking, listening, reading, writing. Vocabulary building, conversation practice and student compositions based on materials from the Russian mass media, contemporary films and readings in modern Russian literature. Prerequisite: three years of college Russian or equivalent.
Credit 3 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS

L39 Russ 431 Russia Today and Yesterday: Cultural Perspectives (in Russian)
On the basis of contemporary literature, official media, popular songs and films, the course examines the ever-changing culture of the Russian people and society during the pre- and post- perestroika periods. Class discussions, lectures and student presentations. Prerequisite: three years of college Russian or the equivalent.
Credit 3 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS Art: HUM BU: IS

L39 Russ 432 Russia Today and Yesterday (in Russian)
Readings of 19th- and 20th-century Russian writers, as well as other literary and non-literary texts. Refinement and expansion of Russian communication skills (speaking, listening, writing, reading). Class discussions, student presentations, compositions. Prerequisite: Russ 431 or the equivalent.
Credit 3 units. A&S: LA A&S IQ: LCD, LS Art: HUM

L39 Russ 4442 The Jewish Experience in Eastern Europe
Same as History 4442
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, CD

L39 Russ 448 Russian History to the 18th Century
Same as History 448C
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S IQ: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM

L39 Russ 4480 Russian Intellectual History
Same as History 4480
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S IQ: HUM BU: IS EN: H

L39 Russ 449 Imperial Russia
The Russian tsars, from Peter the Great to Nicholas II, built the empire which became the Soviet Union. Now that the USSR is gone, historians focus not only on the governance of the Russians, but also on the fate of scores of nationalities ruled by them. This course also explores the changing reputation of Russia's rulers, especially the women rulers of the 18th century; the rise of an intelligentsia committed to radical reform; the fate of millions of serfs, and the government's efforts to steer a path between Muscovite traditions and a dynamic West.
Same as History 449C
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S IQ: HUM Art: HUM

L39 Russ 4699 Reading War and Peace
Same as IAS 4699
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, CD, SD A&S IQ: LCD, SD

L39 Russ 488 Europe on the Move
The long 19th century was a time of radical changes in all spheres of society. Numerous innovations ushered in an irrevocable acceleration of globalization. The revolution in transport and communication — which started with improved mail services, the construction of a modern road network, the steam ship and the telegraph — would eventually cumulate in the development of a European railroad system. Railroads proved to be important carriers of globalization, contributing to a dramatic boost of worldwide economic exchange. The rising mobility of ever-larger population groups was followed by an international exchange of ideas, technical and cultural innovation, workforce and tourists as part of a "fundamental experience of modernity" (W. Kaschuba). This course deals with the impact of the mobility revolution on social and cultural changes in East Central Europe before the First World War — focusing on Prussia/the German Reich and the Russian Empire.
After a brief introduction into the concept of mobility history and the Prussian and Russian societies of the long 19th century we discuss mobility opportunities before the railroad revolution. Thereafter we focus on the emergence of railroad nets in Prussia and Russia. A focus is on the role of mobility in literature/arts and for changing urban and rural landscapes. In a last step the students work on the international aspects of railroad travel, especially tourism.
Same as IAS 488
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH, CD A&S IQ: HUM, LCD  EN: H