

# Russian Language and Literature

Students who want to achieve a high level of proficiency in the Russian language and study Russian literature 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.

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

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## Faculty

### Program Faculty

#### Steven J. Hirsch

Professor of Practice  
PhD, George Washington University  
(Global Studies; Latin American Studies)

#### Hillel Kieval

Professor Emeritus  
Gloria M. Goldstein Professor of Jewish History and Thought  
PhD, Harvard University  
(History; Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies)

#### Max J. Okenfuss

Professor Emeritus  
PhD, Harvard University  
(History)

#### Mikhail Palatnik

Senior Lecturer  
MA equivalent, University of Chernovtsy  
MA, Washington University

#### Nicole Svobodny

Teaching Professor  
PhD, Columbia University  
(Global Studies; Russian Literature)

#### Anika Walke

Associate Professor  
Georgie W. Lewis Career Development Professor  
PhD, University of California, Santa Cruz  
(History; Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies; Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Global Studies)

#### James V. Wertsch

Professor Emeritus  
Director Emeritus of the McDonnell International Scholars Academy  
David R. Francis Distinguished Professor  
PhD, University of Chicago  
(Sociocultural Anthropology; Global Studies)

## 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 and thought, or history, all of which can be pursued with a focus on Russia and the former Soviet Union.

## Minors

- Russian Language and Literature Minor

## Courses

Visit online course listings to view semester offerings for L39 Russ.

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#### L39 Russ 101D Elementary Russian I

Interactive multimedia course designed to emphasize spoken language; includes the very latest video materials geared toward situations in contemporary post-Soviet 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 IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

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#### L39 Russ 102D Elementary Russian II

Continuation of 101D (Russian 101D or the equivalent is required). 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. Prerequisite: Russian 101D.  
Credit 5 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

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#### L39 Russ 211D Intermediate Russian I

Designed to solidify students' control 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 IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

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#### L39 Russ 212D Intermediate Russian II

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 IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

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**L39 Russ 322D Third-Year Russian I**

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 IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

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**L39 Russ 324D Third-Year Russian II**

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 IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

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**L39 Russ 332 Russian Theater, Drama and Performance: From Swan Lake to Punk Prayer**

This course explores performance in Russia from the wandering minstrels of medieval times to protest art of the present day. Genres include tragedy and comedy (Griboedov, Pushkin Gogol), drama (Ostrovsky, Turgenev, Chekhov), experimental theater (Stanislavsky, Evreinov, Meyerhold), ballet (Imperial, Soviet, Ballets Russes), opera (Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, Shostakovich), and performance art (Futurists, Pussy Riot, Pavlensky). We also consider performativity in rituals, public events, and everyday life. Our discussions center on the analysis of short and full-length plays, critical theory, specific productions and performers, and the role that performance has played in shaping Russian culture. All readings are in English translation. No prerequisites.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: IS EN: H

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**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: Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*, Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, and Leo 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 IQ: HUM, LCD, SD, WI Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

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**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 will receive a foundation in Soviet political, social, and cultural history with deeper insights into select aspects of life in Soviet society.

Same as L22 History 3559

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM, IS EN: H

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**L39 Russ 364 Anarchism: History, Theory, and Praxis**

This course analyzes the genesis, historical evolution, and current iterations of global anarchism. It examines anarchist beliefs, ethics, aims, countercultural expressions, organizations, emancipatory practices, and intersectional modes of struggle in different temporal, geographic, and cultural contexts. Special attention will be given to anarchism in the global south, cross-fertilization and relations between anarchists and the Marxist Left, anarcho-feminism, green anarchism, and anarcho-pacifism.

Same as L97 GS 364

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, SSC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

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**L39 Russ 372 Dostoevsky's Novels**

In this discussion-based course we focus on two of Dostoevsky's major novels: *Demons* (also translated as *The Possessed* and *Devils*) and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Our close readings of the novels are enriched by literary theory and primary documents providing socio-historical context. All readings are in English translation. No prerequisites.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, WI BU: IS EN: H

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**L39 Russ 375 Topics in Russian Lit and Culture: (WI)**

The words "Russian Literature" might conjure up long, sprawling, "loose and baggy monsters." However, the short story is arguably the most significant genre in the Russian literary tradition. In this course we do close readings of some of the greatest Russian short stories, mostly from the 19th and 20th centuries. Authors might include Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, Gippius, Teffi, Tsvetaeva, Platonov, Bunin, Nabokov, and others. Some of the questions we explore: Is a short story (*rasskaz*) just a shorter piece of fiction or does it aim to do something very different from a novel? How did the Russians develop-and maybe change-the genre? In what ways are these stories connected to the place and time in which they were written? We will read one or two short stories a week. This is a Writing Intensive course. No knowledge of Russian is required. All readings are in English translation.

Same as L97 GS 3750

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, WI Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: IS EN: H

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**L39 Russ 379 Nabokov in Europe and America**

This course begins with our close reading of Vladimir Nabokov's autobiography *Invitation of a Memory*. We then study some of the author's first works originally written in Russian and published in émigré presses. In the second half of the course, we move to a selection of his short stories and novels originally written in English, including *Lolita*, , and *Pale Fire*. Discussion topics will include memory, multilingualism, migration, authorial identity, narrative personae, and literature as enchantment. Requirements include three short papers, weekly Canvas and in-class participation, and an oral presentation. All assignments are in English. Same as L97 GS 379

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD BU: IS EN: H

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**L39 Russ 3866 Interrogating "Crime and Punishment"**

Whether read as psychological thriller, spiritual journey, or social polemic, Dostoevsky's 1866 novel *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT* has inspired diverse artistic responses around the world. From the nineteenth century to the present day, writers and filmmakers have revisited (and often subverted) questions that Dostoevsky's novel poses: What internal and external forces cause someone to "step over" into crime? What are the implications of a confession? To what extent can the legal system provide a just punishment? Are forgiveness and redemption possible, or even relevant? What role does grace--or luck--play in the entire process? This course begins with our close reading of Dostoevsky's novel and then moves on to short stories,

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novels, literary essays, and movies that engage in dialogue with the Russian predecessor. A central concern of our intertextual approach is to explore the interplay between specific socio-historical contexts and universal questions. All readings are in English. No prerequisites. Same as L97 GS 3866

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: BA EN: H

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**L39 Russ 4442 The Jewish Experience in Eastern Europe**

A study of Jewish culture, society, and politics in Poland-Lithuania, Hungary, the Czech lands, Russia, Romania, and the Ukraine, from the 16th century through the 20th century. Among the topics to be covered are: economic, social, and political relations in Poland-Lithuania; varieties of Jewish religious culture; Russian and Habsburg imperial policies toward the Jews; nationality struggles and antisemitism; Jewish national and revolutionary responses; Jewish experience in war and revolution; the mass destruction of East European Jewish life; and the transition from Cold War to democratic revolution.

Same as L22 History 4442

Credit 3 units.

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**L39 Russ 4868 Russia and the West: Creating and Representing Identity**

What does the West look like through Russia's eyes, and what does Russia look like through the eyes of the West? And to what extent does this relationship matter to the rest of the world? In this course, students will examine American/European/Russian philosophical and polemical essays, literary texts (novels, poetry, short stories), films, dance/vocal/theatrical performances, architecture, travelogues, autobiographies, visual arts, propaganda, and primary historical documents- from the early 19th century to the Cold War to the present day. Our focus is on how group identity (national, ideological, coalitional, and so forth) intersects with various types of personal or individual identity. This is a discussion-based course and active participation (speaking and listening) each class-day is expected. There will be two short writing assignments and weekly online Canvas discussion and collaboration. Students will research a topic of their choice, culminating in an in-class presentation and final paper or project. No prerequisites. All interested students are welcome.

Same as L97 GS 4868

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H

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**L39 Russ 4869 Reading War and Peace**

What is it like to enter into a fictional world for a semester? In this course we read Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace in its entirety. Set during the Napoleonic wars (1805-1812), War and Peace takes the reader on a panoramic journey from the battlefield to the hay field, from the war room to the ballroom. It is a vivid portrayal of 19th-century Russian society as well as a penetrating examination of the causes and consequences of violence and the nature of love and family dynamics. In our discussions, we explore philosophies of history, issues of social injustice and gender inequality, the psychology of human suffering and joy, questions of literary form and genre, and the very experience of reading a long work of fiction. We begin with a selection of Tolstoy's early works that laid the foundation for War and Peace and conclude with a few of Tolstoy's late works that had an enormous influence on, among others, Mahatma Gandhi. Primary texts are supplemented with literary theory and film. All readings are in English.

Same as L97 GS 4869

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SD Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H

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