RUSS 001 Elementary Russian I
This course develops elementary skills in reading, speaking, understanding and writing the Russian language. We will work with an exciting range of authentic written materials, the Internet, videos and recordings relating to the dynamic scene of Russia today. At the end of the course students will be comfortable with the Russian alphabet and will be able to read simplified literary, commercial, and other types of texts (signs, menus, short news articles, short stories) and participate in elementary conversations about daily life (who you are, what you do every day, where you are from, likes and dislikes).
For BA Students: Language Course
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: RUSS 501
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 002 Elementary Russian II
Continuation of RUSS001. Further work developing basic language skills using exciting authentic materials about life in present-day Russia. At the conclusion of the course, students will be prepared to negotiate most basic communication needs in Russia (getting around town, ordering a meal, buying goods and services, polite conversation about topics of interest) and to comprehend most texts and spoken material at a basic level.
For BA Students: Language Course
Taught by: Peeney/Alley
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: RUSS 502
Prerequisite: RUSS 001 or equivalent
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 003 Intermediate Russian I
This course will develop your ability to use the Russian language in the context of typical everyday situations, including university life, family, shopping, entertainment, etc. Role-playing, skits, short readings from literature and the current press, and video clips will be used to help students improve their language skills and their understanding of Russian culture. At the end of the semester you will be able to read and write short texts about your daily schedule and interests, to understand brief newspaper articles, films and short literary texts, and to express your opinions in Russian. In combination with RUSS 004, this course prepares students to satisfy the language competency requirement.
For BA Students: Language Course
Taught by: Peeney/Alley
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: RUSS 503
Prerequisites: RUSS 001 and 002 or placement exam.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 004 Intermediate Russian II
A continuation of RUSS003. This course will further develop your ability to use the Russian language in the context of everyday situations (including relationships, travel and geography, leisure activities) and also through reading and discussion of elementary facts about Russian history, excerpts from classic literature and the contemporary press and film excerpts. At the end of the course you will be able to negotiate most daily situations, to comprehend most spoken and written Russian, to state and defend your point of view. Successful completion of the course prepares students to satisfy the language competency requirement.
For BA Students: Last Language Course
Taught by: Peeney/Alley
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: RUSS 504
Prerequisite: RUSS 003 or placement exam
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 009 Central and Eastern Europe: Cultures, Histories, Societies
The reappearance of the concept of Central and Eastern Europe is one of the most fascinating results of the collapse of the Soviet empire. The course will provide an introduction into the study of this region its cultures, histories, and societies from the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire to the enlargement of the European Union. Students are encouraged to delve deeper into particular countries, disciplines, and sub-regions, such as Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans, through an individual research paper and class presentations.
Taught by: Steiner/Orenstein/Verkholantsev
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: COML 010, EEUR 010
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: This course is one of two required core courses for the Russian and East European Studies (REES) Major.

RUSS 010 INTRO TO RUSSIA AND EURASIA: HISTORIES, CULTURES, SOCIETIES
This course is designed as a broad introduction to the study of Russia and Eurasia that will offer students a multi-disciplinary overview of the cultures, histories and societies of this large and diverse region of the world. It is organized in units that illustrate the approaches of various disciplines to the study of the region, including history, literary studies, cinema studies, art history, and social scientific inquiry. At the conclusion of the course, students will be acquainted with these various disciplinary frameworks and the differences between them, with the modes of analysis and writing that pertain to them, and with fundamental knowledge of the region. They will be prepared for further study of the region in a variety of programs of study, including the Russian and East European Studies major, for which the course serves as a foundation.
Taught by: Platt/Staff
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: EEUR 009
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Out of an obscure, backward empire, the Soviet Union emerged to become the great political laboratory of the twentieth century. This course will trace the roots of the world's first socialist society and its attempts to recast human relations and human nature itself. Topics include the origins of the Revolution of 1917, the role of ideology in state policy and everyday life, the Soviet Union as the center of world communism, the challenge of ethnic diversity, and the reasons for the USSR's sudden implosion in 1991. Focusing on politics, society, culture, and their interaction, we will examine the rulers (from Lenin to Gorbachev) as well as the ruled (peasants, workers, and intellectuals; Russians and non-Russians). The course will feature discussions of selected texts, including primary sources in translation.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Nathans/Holquist
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: HIST 048
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 107 Russian Outside the Classroom I
The goal of RUSS107 is to provide students of Russian language and students who spoke Russian at home with formalized opportunities to improve their conversation and comprehension skills while experiencing various aspects of Russian culture. There will be no weekly assignments or readings, but all students will be expected to contribute at a level equivalent to their Russian-speaking abilities both in class and on the newsletter final project. The course consists of attending regular conversation hours in addition to a tea-drinking hour in the department (F 4-5pm), film viewings, and a single outside cultural event (e.g., a concert of Russian music at the Kimmel Center).
Taught by: Yakubova
One-term course offered either term
Prerequisite: At least four semesters of Russian
Activity: Seminar
0.5 Course Units

RUSS 108 Russian Outside the Classroom II
This is a half-credit course that consists of a variety of fun and entertaining non-classroom Russian language activities. Students who have taken at least one semester of Russian will take part in: 1. Russian lunch and dinner table; 2. Russian Tea and conversation, featuring cartoons, poetry readings, music listening, news broadcast, games, cooking lessons, and informal visits by guests; 3. The Russian Film Series; 4. field trips to Russian cultural events in the area (symphony, drama, film, etc.); 5. other Russian Program events.
Taught by: Yakubova
One-term course offered either term
Prerequisites: At least four semesters of Russian, and RUSS107
Activity: Seminar
0.5 Course Units
Notes: Continuation of RUSS107.

RUSS 115 Before Transgender: Hermaphrodites in 19th Century Literature
This course provides a literary and cultural prehistory to contemporary discourses on transgender identity by focusing on the figure of the hermaphrodite in 19th Russia and the West. Far from a marginal subject, the hermaphrodite and intersex characters played central roles in the novels of Balzac, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and many others whose work we will read in this course. Interdisciplinary in nature, this course draws on 19th century discourses in medicine, psychology, opera, religious philosophy, and political theory to understand why characters who exist outside of the male/female gender binary feature so prominently in 19th century literature and cultural texts across a wide range of traditions (Anglophone, French, and Russian, and others.).
Taught by: Wilson
Also Offered As: GSWS 115
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 048 The Rise and Fall of the Russian Empire, 1552-1917
How and why did Russia become the center of the world's largest empire, a single state encompassing eleven time zones and over a hundred ethnic groups? To answer this question, we will explore the rise of a distinct political culture beginning in medieval Muscovy, its transformation under the impact of a prolonged encounter with European civilization, and the various attempts to re-form Russia from above and below prior to the Revolution of 1917. Main themes include the facade vs. the reality of central authority, the intersection of foreign and domestic issues, the development of a radical intelligentsia, and the tension between empire and nation.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Nathans/Holquist
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: HIST 048
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 105 Accelerated Elementary Russian
TWO IN ONE: This is an intensive two-credit course covering two semesters of the first-year sequence (RUSS001 and 002). The course is designed for students with no background in Russian and develops language competence in speaking, reading, writing and understanding contemporary Russian. Class work emphasizes development of communication skills and cultural awareness. Together with RUSS003 and 004 fulfills Penn Language Requirement.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
2 Course Units

RUSS 100 Figuring Out Russia: Introduction to Russian Culture
The course introduces students to major topics in Russian history, literature, art and religion. Students will learn about Russia's past and present, its myths and beliefs, about its Czars and peasants, its heroes and rebels, about its artists, musicians and intellectuals, about its cities and society. Course materials include short works of major Russian authors, as well as films, musical scores and works of art. This introductory course will prepare students for more advanced and specialized courses in Russian literature and history.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
RUSS 123 Russia and Eastern Europe in International Affairs
Russia and the European Union (EU) are engaged in a battle for influence in Eastern Europe. EU foreign policy towards its Eastern neighbors is based on economic integration and the carrot of membership. With the application of this powerful incentive, Central and Southeastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Croatia have progressed rapidly towards integration with the EU (and NATO). Yet, given Russia's opposition to the further enlargement, membership is off the table for the large semi-Western powers such as Russia itself and Turkey and the smaller countries inhabiting an emerging buffer zone between Russia and the EU, such as Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Belarus. These in-between countries find themselves subject to intense competition for influence between Eastern and Western powers. In this context, EU countries must balance their energy dependence on Russia and need for new markets and geopolitical stability with concern for human rights, democratic governance, and self-determination. What are the trade-offs implicit in the foreign policies of Russia, EU member states, and Eastern Europe? What are the best policy approaches? What are the main opportunities and obstacles?
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Orenstein
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: EEUR 152, PSCI 267
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 125 The Adultery Novel
The object of this course is to analyze narratives of adultery from Shakespeare to the present and to develop a vocabulary for thinking critically about the literary conventions and social values that inform them. Many of the themes (of desire, transgression, suspicion, discovery) at the heart of these stories also lie at the core of many modern narratives. Is there anything special, we will ask, about the case of adultery—once called “a crime which contains within itself all others”? What might these stories teach us about the way we read in general? By supplementing classic literary accounts by Shakespeare, Pushkin, Flaubert, Chekhov, and Proust with films and with critical analyses, we will analyze the possibilities and limitations of the different genres and forms under discussion, including novels, films, short stories, and theatre. What can these forms show us (or not show us) about desire, gender, family and social obligation? Through supplementary readings and class discussions, we will apply a range of critical approaches to place these narratives of adultery in a social and literary context, including formal analyses of narrative and style, feminist criticism, Marxist and sociological analyses of the family, and psychoanalytic understandings of desire and family life.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Platt
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: CIMS 125, COML 127, GSWS 125
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English.

RUSS 130 Russian Ghost Stories
In this course, we will read and discuss ghost stories written by some of the most well-known Russian writers. The goal of the course is threefold: to familiarize the students with brilliant and thrilling texts which represent various periods of Russian literature; to examine the artistic features of ghost stories and to explore their ideological implications. With attention to relevant scholarship (Freud, Todorov, Derrida, Greenblatt), we will pose questions about the role of the storyteller in ghost stories, and about horror and the fantastic. We will also ponder gender and class, controversy over sense and sensation, spiritual significance and major changes in attitudes toward the supernatural. We will consider the concept of the apparition as a peculiar cultural myth, which tells us about the “dark side” of the Russian literary imagination and about the historical and political conflicts which have haunted Russian minds in previous centuries. Readings will include literary works by Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Chekhov, and Bulgakov, as well as works by some lesser, yet extremely interesting, authors. We will also read excerpts from major treatises regarding spiritualism, including Swedenborg, Kant, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Mme Blavatsky. The course consists of 28 sessions (“nights”) and includes film presentations and horrifying slides.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 134 Communism
The rise and fall of Communism dominated the history of the short twentieth century from the Russian revolution of 1917 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. As a system of government, Communism is more or less dead, but its utopian ideals of liberation from exploitation and want live on. Communism remains the one political-economic system that presented, for a time, an alternative to global capitalism. In this course, students will gain an introduction to socialist and Communist political thought and explore Communist political and economic regimes and their successes and failures, critics and dissidents, efforts at reform, and causes of collapse. We will learn about the remnants of Communism in China, North Korea, and Cuba and efforts of contemporary theorists to imagine a future for Communism.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Orenstein
Also Offered As: EEUR 153, PSCI 144
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 135 Cold War: A Global History
The Cold War was more than a military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union: it was a global force-field within which the world developed for nearly five decades. This course will explore the Cold War as an international phenomenon, using some of the newest literature covering not only the military and diplomatic history of the period but the social and cultural impact of the confrontation between capitalism and communism. We will explore the origins of the conflict, the formation of opposing blocs, the interplay between periods of tension and detente, and the relationship between the “center” of the conflict in the North Atlantic-European area and the global “periphery”, as well as the remarkable way the Cold War ended. Curiosity about Cold War history and a willingness to explore its drama and complexity are the only prerequisites for this course. No prior knowledge of the subject is assumed.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science Sector
Taught by: Nathans
Also Offered As: HIST 135
Activity: Recitation
1 Course Unit
RUSS 136 Portraits of Russian Society: Art, Fiction, Drama
This course covers 19C Russian cultural and social history. Each week-long unit is organized around a single medium-length text (novella, play, memoir) which opens up a single scene of social history: birth, death, duel, courtship, tsar, and so on. Each of these main texts is accompanied by a set of supplementary materials: paintings, historical readings, cultural-analytical readings, excerpts from other literary works, etc. The object of the course is to understand the social codes and rituals that informed nineteenth-century Russian life, and to apply this knowledge in interpreting literary texts, other cultural objects, and even historical and social documents (letters, memoranda, etc.). We will attempt to understand social history and literary interpretation as separate disciplines yet also as disciplines that can inform one another. In short: we will read the social history through the text, and read the text against the social history.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science
Taught by: Platt
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: HIST 047
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: No prior language experience required.

RUSS 145 Masterpieces of 19th Century Russian Literature
Major Russian writers in English translation: Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, early Tolstoy, and early Dostoevsky.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Steiner
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 149 Slavery, Serfdom, and Cultures of Bondage in the U.S. and Russia
During the Cold War, the United States and Russia were locked in an ideological battle, as capitalist and communist superpowers, over the question of private property. So how did these two countries approach the most important question regarding property that ever faced human civilization: how could governments justify the treatment of its subjects, people, as property? In 1862, Russia abolished serfdom, a form of human bondage that had existed in its territories since the 11th century. Just a year later, in 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring America’s slaves “then, thenceforward, and forever free.” What forces, both domestic and international, both political and cultural, influenced this near simultaneous awakening in which huge swaths of the Russian and U.S. populations were liberated? While scholars have often sought to compare slavery and serfdom as institutions, this course does not attempt to draw connections between the two. Rather, we will focus on how the slavery/anti-slavery and serfdom/anti-serfdom debates were framed in each respective country as well as how Russia used American slavery and the U.S. used Russian serfdom to shape their own domestic debates.
Taught by: Wilson
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 148, COML 148
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 155 Masterpieces of 20th Century Russian Literature
Major Russian writers in English translation: Tolstoy, Chekhov, Pasternak, Babel, Solzhenitsyn, and others.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Steiner
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 160 Sex and Socialism
This seminar examines classic and current scholarship and literature on gender and sexuality in contemporary Eastern Europe, and examines the dialogue and interchange of ideas between East and West. Although the scholarly and creative works will primarily investigate the changing status of women during the last three decades, the course will also look at changing constructions of masculinity and LGBT movements and communities in the former communist bloc. Topics will include: the woman question before 1989; gender and emerging nationalisms; visual representations in television and film; social movements; work; romance and intimacy; spirituality; and investigations into the constructed concepts of freedom and human rights.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: EEUR 160, GSWS 160
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 165 Russian and East European Film After WWII
This course examines the Russian and East European contribution to world cinema after WWII - Stalinist aesthetics and desalinization, WWII in film, the installation of totalitarianism in Eastern Europe and the Cold War in film, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the post-soviet condition, cinematic representations of Yugoslavia's violent breakup; the new Romanian waive. Major filmmakers in discussion include Kalatozov, Tarkovsky, Wajda, Polanski, Forman, Mentzel, Sabo, Kusturitsa, Konchalovsky, Mikhalkov and others.
Taught by: Todorov
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 165, EEUR 165
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
RUSS 171 THE SOCIALIST CITY
This course will explore the ideology and politics of the socialist city in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and the Second World. We will focus on how design professionals, politicians, and residents realized utopian socialist values in the face of national design traditions, local politics, and limited resources. Beginning with the Soviet case, the course will consider how planners and architects addressed modernization, multi-family housing, and neighborhood units in new city plans. We will consider capitals, like Moscow, as well as less well-known regional centers that had strong local identities, such as Tashkent, Belgrade, and Prague. We will examine the state’s use of public spaces for commemorations and preservationists’ reinterpretation of existing historic sites. In addition, we will consider how everyday residents experienced the socialist city, including its multi-family housing, shopping centers, and subway systems. We will address how citizens circumvented official state channels to obtain state housing and illegally build homes for themselves, sometimes in a folk style. The course will center on Soviet and East European cities, but also address socialist cities in Cuba and Africa whose design was influenced by transnational exchanges.
Taught by: Aplenc
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: EEUR 171
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 189 Soviet and Post-Soviet Economy
The course will cover the development and operation of the Soviet centrally planned economy—one of the grandest social experiments of the 20th century. We will review the mechanisms of plan creation, the push for the collectivization and further development of Soviet agriculture, the role of the Soviet educational system and the performance of labor markets (including forced labor camps—GULags). We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system and the causes of its collapse. Privatization, called by some “piratization,” will be one of the central issues in our consideration of the transition from central planning to a market economy in the early 1990s. Even though our main focus will be on the Soviet economy and post-Soviet transition, we will occasionally look back in time to the tsarist era and even further back to find evidence to help explain Soviet/Russian economic development.
Taught by: Vekker
Also Offered As: PPE 062
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 190 Terrorism: Russian Origins and 21st Century Methods
This course studies the emergence of organized terrorism in nineteenth-century Russia. It examines the philosophy of the terrorist struggle through its methods, causes, various codes, and manifestoes that defined its nature for the times to come. We critique intellectual movements such as nihilism, anarchism, and populism that inspired terrorism defining the political violence and disorder as beneficial acts. The issue of policing terrorism becomes central when we study a police experiment to infiltrate, delegitimize and ultimately neutralize terrorist networks in late imperial Russia. The discussions draw on the ideology and political efficacy of the conspiratorial mode of operation, terrorist tactics such as assassination and hostage-taking, the cell structure of the groups and underground incognito of the strikers, their maniacal self-denial, revolutionary asceticism, underground mentality, faceless omnipotence, and other attributes-intensifiers of its mystique.
Taught by: Todorov
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 191 Putin’s Russia: Culture, Society and History
Winston Churchill famously said that Russia “is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma. Strikingly, today many informed Russians would agree: no one can provide definitive answers concerning what has driven Russian public life and politics over the past three years, as it ricocheted from the mass protests of 2011 and 2012, into the Pussy Riot scandal, then the Olympics, and most recently to the intense patriotism driving the Russian annexation of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine. In this course we will examine how Russians themselves communicate about and represent Russia and what this reveals about this complex society and its development. We will consider print journalism, novels, films, televised media, and the internet paying close attention both to particular representations and to social institutions for their production, dissemination and consumption. Topics of special concern will include: conspiracy theories, representations of Russian history, collective identity and patriotism, intellectuals and elites, gender and sexuality, consumption and wealth. Putins Russia is an introductory level course for which no prior knowledge Russian history, culture or society is required. All readings and screenings will be in English.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Platt
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 150
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: No prior knowledge of Russian is required.

RUSS 193 War and Representation in Russia, Europe and the U.S.
Representations of war have been created for as many reasons as wars are fought: to legitimate conflict, to celebrate military prowess, to critique brutality, to mobilize popular support, to vilify an enemy, and to generate national pride. In this course we will examine literary and cinematic representations of war, produced in Russia, Europe, and the United States. Over the course of the semester we will reflect on the tension between the need for memorialization and the limits of representation: How is war represented in literature and film? How do those mediums both enable and thwart us in our attempt to capture wartime experiences? What is the relationship between perspective, politics, and representation? And finally, how is the experience of being in a war refracted through gender, race, class, and sexuality? Authors we will read in this class might include Leo Tolstoy, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Stephen Crane, Ernest Hemingway, Albert Camus, John Okada, Virginia Woolf, Kurt Vonnegut, Rabih Alameddine, and Toni Morrison.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Platt
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COMM 291
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
RUSS 195 History as Culture
The object of the course is to investigate what happens when historical events and personages are represented in cultural life. We will study plays, novels, paintings, film and television as well as a bit of history-taking us from Shakespeare to Downton Abbey. Auxiliary readings in theory and method will allow us to grapple with the deeper questions of our readings: How and why do modern societies care about the past? What is the difference between a historical novel and a work of historiography? Do different kinds of writing offer different forms of truth about human events? As we will learn, the representation of history has a history of its own, which we can trace from the renaissance up to the present day. Readings will include works by: Shakespeare, Scott, Tolstoy, Hughes, Eisenstein, Marquez, Eco and others. In the course of the semester, students will gain competence in the interpretation of literary texts from a variety of cultures and periods, and also improve their analytical writing skills.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Platt
Also Offered As: COML 100, ENGL 100
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 196 Russian Short Story
This course studies the development of 19th and 20th century Russian literature through one of its most distinct and highly recognized genres, the short story. The readings include great masters of fiction such as Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Solzhenitsyn, and others. The course presents the best works of short fiction and situates them in a literary process that contributes to the history of a larger cultural-political context. Students will learn about the historical formation, poetic virtue, and thematic characteristics of major narrative modes such as romanticism, utopia, realism, modernism, socialist realism, and post-modernism. We critique the strategic use of various devices of literary representation such as irony, absurd, satire, grotesque, anecdote, etc. Some of the main topics and issues include: culture of the duel; the role of chance; the riddle of death; anatomy of madness; imprisonment and survival; the pathologies of St. Petersburg; terror and homo sovieticus.
Taught by: Todorov
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 197 Madness and Madmen in Russian Culture
This course will explore the theme of madness in Russian literature and arts from the medieval period through the October Revolution of 1917. The discussion will include formative masterpieces by Russian writers (Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Bulgakov), painters (Repin, Vrubel, Filonov), composers (Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, and Stravinsky), and film-directors (Protazanov, Eisenstein), as well as non-fictional documents such as Russian medical, judicial, political, and philosophical treatises and essays on madness.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science Sector
Taught by: Peene
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 197
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 201 Dostoevsky and His Legacy
This course explores the ways Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) portrays the "inner world(s)" of his characters. Dostoevsky's psychological method will be considered against the historical, ideological, and literary contexts of medieval to late nineteenth-century Russia. The course consists of three parts: External World (the contexts of Dostoevsky), "Inside" Dostoevsky's World (the author's technique and ideas) and The World of Text (close reading of Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov). Students will write three essays on various aspects of Dostoevsky's "spiritual realism."
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: COML 207
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 202 Tolstoy
Few authors have ever been able to combine their moral and artistic visions as closely as Tolstoy. Over the course of the semester, we will plot how Tolstoy's ethical concerns changed over the course of his life and how this was reflected in works, which include some of the greatest prose ever written. We will begin by surveying the majestic and far-reaching world of his novels and end with some of Tolstoy's short later works that correspond with the ascent of Tolstoyism as virtually its own religion.
Taught by: Todorov
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: COML 204
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Ben Franklin Seminar

RUSS 213 Saints and Devils in Russian Literature and Tradition
This course is about Russian literary imagination, which is populated with saints and devils, believers and religious rebels, holy men and sinners. In Russia, people's frame of mind had been formed by a mix of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and earlier pagan beliefs, the quest for faith, spirituality, and the meaning of life has invariably been connected with religious matters. How can one find the right path in life? Is humility the way to salvation? Should one live for God or for the people? Does God even exist? In "Saints and Devils" we read works of great masters of Russian literature and learn about the historic trends that have filled Russia's national character with religious and mystical spirit. We start with old Russian fanciful stories and legends of crafty demons and all-forbearing saints. The master of fantastic writing, Nikolai Gogol, will teach us how to triumph over the devil. Together with Anton Chekhov and Leo Tolstoy, we contemplate an ambivalent cultural image of woman as a victim or a sinful agent of the devil. Immersed in the world of Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov, we follow the characters in their search for truth, faith, and love. In The Master and Margarita, Mikhail Bulgakov will tell us his fantastic and devilish story of Pontius Pilate and we will see for ourselves that "A man will receive his deserts in accordance with his beliefs."
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 213, RELS 218
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
RUSS 217 Russian Politics
This course will present an in-depth examination of political, economic and social change in post-Soviet Russia within a historical context. After a brief discussion of contemporary problems in Russia, the first half of the course will delve into the rise of communism in 1917, the evolution of the Soviet regime, and the tensions between ideology and practice over the seventy years of communist rule up until 1985. The second part of the course will begin with an examination of the Gorbachev period and the competing interpretations of how the events between 1985 and 1991 may have contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union. We will then proceed to make sense of the continuities and changes in politics, economics and society in contemporary Russia. Important topics will include the confrontations accompanying the adoption of a new constitution, the emergence of competing ideologies and parties, the struggle over economic privatization, the question of federalism and nationalism, social and political implicatons of economic reform, and prospects for Russia’s future in the Putin and post-Putin era.
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: PSCI 217
Activity: Recitation
1 Course Unit

RUSS 220 Russia and the West
This course will explore the representations of the West in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian literature and philosophy. We will consider the Russian visions of various events and aspects of Western political and social life Revolutions, educational system, public executions, resorts, etc. within the context of Russian intellectual history. We will examine how images of the West reflect Russia’s own cultural concerns, anticipations, and biases, as well as aesthetic preoccupations and interests of Russian writers. The discussion will include literary works by Karamzin, Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Leskov, and Tolstoy, as well as non-fictional documents, such as travelers’ letters, diaries, and historiosophical treatises of Russian Freemasons, Romantic and Positivist thinkers, and Russian social philosophers of the late Nineteenth century. A basic knowledge of nineteenth-century European history is desirable. The class will consist of lectures, discussion, short writing assignments, and two in-class tests.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: COML 220, HIST 220
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: From the Other Shore: Russia and the West

RUSS 222 Imagining Asia: Russia and the East
This course examines the important role of the East in Russian literature and nationalism. Focusing specifically on the Caucasus, Central Asia, Iran, and Turkey, this course will analyze how Russian writers connected the East to Russian identity, and how their approaches implicate different artistic periods (Romanticism, Realism, Socialist Realism, Post-Modernism) and different political atmospheres (Tsarist Russia, Soviet Union, Post-Soviet). Students will also ascertain how Russian literature on the East has affected and influenced literature and political movements produced in the East. In particular, students will analyze how Soviet Central Asian writers, Iranian Socialists, and contemporary Turkish writers were influenced by Russian literature and Soviet ideology. Ultimately, this course examines the impact of Russian cultural and political history in 20th century Central Asia and the Middle East.
Readings will include works by: Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Platonov, Chingiz Aitmatov, Sadek Hedayat, Orhan Pamuk, and others.
Also Offered As: COML 217, NELC 222
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 234 Medieval Russia: Origins of Russian Cultural Identity
This course offers an overview of the cultural history of Rus from its origins to the eighteenth century, a period which laid the foundation for the Russian Empire. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach to the evolution of the main cultural paradigms of Russian Orthodoxy viewed in a broader European context. Although this course is historical in content, it is also about modern Russia. The legacy of Medieval Rus is still referenced, often allegorically, in contemporary social and cultural discourse as the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian societies attempt to reconstruct and reinterpret their histories. In this course, students learn that the study of the medieval cultural and political history explains many aspects of modern Russian society, its culture and mentality.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 235, HIST 219, SLAV 517
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 240 Napoleonic Era and Tolstoy
In this course we will read what many consider to be the greatest book in world literature. This work, Tolstoy’s War and Peace, is devoted to one of the most momentous periods in world history, the Napoleonic Era (1789-1815). We will study both the novel and the era of the Napoleonic Wars: the military campaigns of Napoleon and his opponents, the grand strategies of the age, political intrigues and diplomatic betrayals, the ideologies and human dramas, the relationship between art and history. How does literature help us to understand this era? How does history help us to understand this great novel? Because we will read War and Peace over the course of the entire semester, readings will be manageable (circa 100 pages of the epic and 50 pages of additional reading per week) and very enjoyable.
Taught by: Holquist
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 236, HIST 333
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English.
RUSS 250 Tarkovsky's Passions
Andrei Tarkovsky is universally acknowledged to be the greatest Soviet filmmaker of the last half of the twentieth century. In Kurosawas assessment following Tarkovskys death in the late 1980s, he had no equal among film directors alive now. In Ingmar Bergmans words, Tarkovskys work was a miracle. His films are beautiful, intellectually challenging, and spiritually profound. They range from Ivans Childhood, an exploration of wartime experience through the eyes of a child; to Solaris, a philosophical essay in the form of a science-fiction thriller; to Andrei Rublev, an investigation of the power of art and spirituality. In this course, we will study Tarkovskys films and life, with attention both to his formal and artistic accomplishments, his thought and writings concerning art and film, and the cultural and political contexts of his work.

Taught by: Platt
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 250
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 260 USSR after Stalin
How are human behaviors and attitudes shaped in a socialist society? What forms do conformity and dissent take under a revolutionary regime? This course will explore the cultural history of the Soviet Union from the end of the Second World War to the collapse of communism in 1991. We will investigate a variety of strategies of resistance to state power as well as the sources of communisms enduring legitimacy for millions of Soviet citizens. Above all, we will be concerned with the power of the word and image in Soviet public and private life. Assigned texts will include memoirs, manifestos, underground and officially approved fiction & poetry, films, works of art, and secondary literature.

Taught by: Platt & Nathans
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: HIST 413
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 261 Russian Thinkers
This class focuses on the complex relations between philosophy, history, and art in Russia and offers discussions of works of major Russian authors (such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Khlebnikov), religious and political thinkers (Chaadaev, Herzen, Berdiaev, Lenin, Bogdanov), avant-garde artists (Filonov, Malevich), and composers (Skrjabin) who created and tested in their lives their own, sometimes very peculiar and radical, worldviews. We will consider these worldviews against a broad cultural background and will reenact them in class in the form of philosophical mini-dramas. The only prerequisite for this course is intellectual curiosity and willingness to embrace diverse, brave and often very weird ideas.

Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 255
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 275 Russian History in Film
This course draws on fictional, dramatic and cinematic representations of Russian history based on Russian as well as non-Russian sources and interpretations. The analysis targets major modes of imagining, such as narrating, showing and reenacting historical events, personae and epochs justified by different, historically mutating ideological postulates and forms of national self-consciousness. Common stereotypes of picturing Russia from "foreign" perspectives draw special attention. The discussion involves the following themes and outstanding figures: the mighty autocrats Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and Catherine the Great; the tragic ruler Boris Godunov; the brazen rebel and royal impostor Pugachev; the notorious Rasputin, his uncanny powers, sex-appeal, and court machinations; Lenin and the October Revolution; images of war; times of construction and times of collapse of the Soviet Colossus.

Taught by: Todorov
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 275
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 299 Independent Study
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1 Course Unit

RUSS 311 Russian Conversation and Composition
This course develops students' skills in speaking and writing about topics in Russian literature, contemporary society, politics, and everyday life. Topics include women, work and family; sexuality; the economic situation; environmental problems; and life values. Materials include selected short stories by 19th and 20th century Russian authors, video-clips of interviews, excerpts from films, and articles from the Russian media. Continued work on grammar and vocabulary building.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: RUSS 511
Prerequisites: RUSS 004 or placement exam.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 312 Russian Conversation and Composition II
Primary emphasis on speaking, writing, and listening. Development of advanced conversational skills needed to carry a discussion or to deliver a complex narrative. This course will be based on a wide variety of topics from everyday life to the discussion of political and cultural events. Russian culture and history surveyed briefly. Materials include Russian TV broadcast, newspapers, Internet, selected short stories by contemporary Russian writers. Offered each spring.

For BA Students: Advanced Language Course
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: RUSS 512
Prerequisite: RUSS 311
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
RUSS 360 Russian for Heritage Speakers I
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to achieve proficiency in the language. Topics will include an intensive introduction to the Russian writing system and grammar, focusing on exciting materials and examples drawn from classic and contemporary Russian culture and social life. Students who complete this course in combination with RUSS361 satisfy the Penn Language Requirement.
Taught by: Nazyrova
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Previous language experience required

RUSS 361 Russian for Heritage Speakers II
This course is a continuation of RUSS360. In some cases, students who did not take RUSS360 but have basic reading and writing skills may be permitted to enroll with the instructor’s permission. Students who complete RUSS361 with a passing grade will satisfy the Penn Language Requirement.
For BA Students: Last Language Course
Taught by: Nazyrova
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisites: Prerequisites: Russian 360 or at least three and no more than six years of Russian formal schooling, or instructor's permission.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

RUSS 399 Supervised Work
Hours and credits on an individual basis.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1 Course Unit

RUSS 408 READING RUSSIAN HISTORY
The course explores defining episodes, concepts, and figures in Russian history, from the earliest time to the present day, and their reception in today’s scholarship and society. Students learn about Russian historical heritage through the reading of primary sources and analytical essays, as well as examining how this history is used in the present socio-political and ideological discourse. Work on language focuses on matters of style, sentence structure, and vocabulary building.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 412 Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature and Culture: Romantics and Realists
This course continues developing students’ advanced skills in Russian, and combines advanced study of the Russian language with an examination of the fundamental literary movements and figures of nineteenth-century Russian literature and culture. Course materials include prosaic and poetic texts by Pushkin, Gogol’, Lemontov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, as well as films and art. Language work will be devoted to writing, syntactical and stylistic analysis, vocabulary, academic speech, and listening comprehension.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: Russian 312 or placement exam.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 413 Twentieth-Century Russian Literature, Film and Culture: Utopia, Revolution and Dissent
This course continues developing students’ advanced skills in Russian, and introduces students to major movements and figures of twentieth-century Russian literature and culture. We will read the works of modern Russian writers, and watch and discuss feature films. The course will introduce the first Soviet films and works of the poets of the Silver Age and beginning of the Soviet era as well as the works from later periods up to the Perestroika and Glasnost periods (the late 1980s).
Taught by: Bourlatskaya
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: Russian 312 or placement exam.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 416 Business and Democracy in the New Russia
This course continues developing students’ advanced skills in Russian, and is designed to familiarize students with contemporary Russian society, its historical background and its present political and economic structure, and to develop functional proficiency in speaking, writing, reading and listening. The course will focus on a variety of issues central to Russian society since the fall of the Soviet Union, including changing values, political parties and movements, the business climate and businessmen, various nationalities within Russia, women in the family and at work. Course materials will include interviews, articles, essays by leading Russian journalists and statesmen, and contemporary Russian movies.
Taught by: Bourlatskaya
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: RUSS 312 or placement exam.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 417 Russian Modernism: Literature, Music & Visual Arts
This course continues developing students’ advanced skills in Russian, while closely studying a representative selection of texts from the modernist period. The course will explore central issues of the period, such as the relationship between literature and revolution, reconceptualizations of society, history and the self. Of particular interest will be authors’ experimentation in form and language in order to present afresh the experience of life. Textual study is combined with a general overview of the period, including reference to parallel trends in the visual arts, architecture and music, as well as contemporary intellectual movements. Principal writers studied will include Belyi, Sologub, Remizov, Andreev, Artsybashev, Gorky, Zamiatin, Pilnyak, Platonov, Zoshchenko, Babel, Olesha, and Kharnam.
Course offered spring; even-numbered years
Prerequisites: RUSS312 or placement exam.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.
RUSS 418 Russian Culture and Society Now
This course continues developing students' advanced skills in Russian, while surveying main social, political and cultural developments in Russia since 1991. In these two turbulent decades Russia has undergone colossal changes ranging from disintegration of the Soviet Empire to the rapid development of new gastronomical tastes and new trends in literature and culture. The course will explore diverse and often conflicting cultural sensibilities in contemporary Russian fiction, poetry, journalism, scholarly writing, performance art, as well as in pop-culture and film. Topics under consideration will include reassessing Russia's luminous cultural heritage as well as traumatic periods in Soviet history; search for identity and the recent drift towards neo-nationalism; gender issues and the contemporary focus on fatherlessness; changing attitudes towards former cultural taboos; dealing with Russia's current political and cultural dilemmas. The course also incorporates two advanced Russian colloquiums with guest appearances of Prof. Kevin Platt and Ilya Vinitsky.
Course usually offered summer term only
Prerequisites: Russian 312 or placement exam.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 419 Russian Song and Folklore
This course continues developing students' advanced skills in Russian. Song and, in particular, folk song is an essential and exciting component of Russian culture and social life, and an important language learning tool. The course offers a general introduction to the history of Russian folklore, song and musical culture. Students will explore the historical trajectory of Russian song and its various genres (from folk to the modern Estrada), examine the poetic and literary principles of song, discuss its aesthetic properties, and analyze the educational, community-building and ideological roles of song in Russian society.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: Russian 312 or placement exam.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 420 Contemporary Russia Through Film
This course continues developing students' advanced skills in Russian and offers intensive study of Russian film, arguably the most powerful medium for reflecting changes in modern society. This course will examine Russia's transition to democracy and market economy through the eyes of its most creative and controversial cinematographers. The course will focus on the often agonizing process of changing values and attitudes as the country moves from Soviet to Post-Soviet society. Russian films with English subtitles will be supplemented by readings from contemporary Russian media sources. The course provides an excellent visual introduction to the problems of contemporary Russia society.
Taught by: Bourlatskaya
One-term course offered either term
Prerequisites: Russian 312 or placement exam.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 426 Chekhov: Stage & Screen
What's so funny, Mr. Chekhov? This question is often asked by critics and directors who still are puzzled with Chekhov's definition of his four major plays as comedies. Traditionally, all of them are staged and directed as dramas, melodramas, or tragedies. Should we cry or should we laugh at Chekhovian characters who commit suicide, or are killed, or simply cannot move to a better place of living? Is the laughable synonymous to comedy and the comic? Should any fatal outcome be considered tragic? All these and other questions will be discussed during the course. The course is intended to provide the participants with a concept of dramatic genre that will assist them in approaching Chekhov's plays as comedies. In addition to reading Chekhov's works, Russian and western productions and film adaptations of Chekhov's works will be screened. Among them are, Vanya on 42nd Street with Andre Gregory, and Four Funny Families. Those who are interested will be welcome to perform and/or direct excerpts from Chekhov's works.
Taught by: Zubarev
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 432, COML 196
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Forms a part of the LPS Masters in Liberal Arts Program.

RUSS 430 Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Film
This course studies the cinematic representation of civil wars, ethnic conflicts, nationalistic doctrines, and genocidal policies. The focus is on the violent developments that took place in Russia and on the Balkans after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and were conditioned by the new geopolitical dynamics that the fall of communism had already created. We study media broadcasts, documentaries, feature films representing the Eastern, as well as the Western perspective. The films include masterpieces such as "Time of the Gypsies", "Underground", "Prisoner of the Mountains", "Before the Rain", "Behind Enemy Lines", and others.
Taught by: Todorov
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 430, EEUR 430
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Forms a part of the LPS Masters in Liberal Arts Program.

RUSS 432 Fate and Chance in Literature and Culture
In Fate and Chance in Literature and Culture, we will explore these two interrelated concepts in comparative perspective over a broad historical range. As a result, the students will learn how the philosophy of fate and chance has been reflected in works of different Russian authors and in different cultural and political environments. In Russian as well as western systems of belief fate and chance represent two extreme visions of the universal order, or, perhaps, two diametrically opposed cosmic forces: complete determinism, on the one hand, and complete chaos or unpredictability, on the other. These visions have been greatly reflected by various mythopoetic systems. In this course, we will investigate religious and folkloric sources from a series of Russian traditions compared to other Indo-European traditions (Greek, East-European). Readings will include The Song of Prince Igor's Campaign, The Gambler by Dostoevsky, The Queen of Spades by Pushkin, Vij by Gogol, The Black Monk by Chekhov, The Fatal Eggs by Bulgakov, and more.
Taught by: Zubarev
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 432, COML 196
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Forms a part of the LPS Masters in Liberal Arts Program.
RUSS 434 Media and Terrorism
This course draws on fictional, cinematic and mass-media representation of terrorism based on Russian as well as Western examples. We study how the magnitude of the political impact of terrorism relates to the historically changing means of production of its striking iconology. The course exposes students to major modes of imagining, narrating, showing, reenacting terrorism and forging its mystique. We examine the emergence of organized terrorism in nineteenth-century Russia as an original political-cultural phenomenon. We trace its rapid expansion and influence on the public life in the West, and on the Balkans. Historical, political, and aesthetic approaches converge in a discussion of several case studies related to intellectual and spiritual movements such as nihilism, anarchism, populism, religious fundamentalism, and others. The public appearance of the terrorist activism and its major attributes are viewed as powerful intensifiers of its political effect: self-denial, ascetic aura, and stratagem of mystification, underground mentality, and martyrdom. The pedagogical goal of this course is to promote and cultivate critical view and analytical skills that will enable students to deal with different historical as well as cultural modes of (self-)representation of terrorism. Students are expected to learn and be able to deal with a large body of historical-factual and creative-interpreted information.

Taught by: Todorov
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Forms a part of the LPS Masters in Liberal Arts Program.

RUSS 444 Haunted House: Russian Realism in European Context
In this class we will examine works of major Russian Realist writers, painters, and composers considering them within Western ideological contexts of the 1850-1880s: positivism, materialism, behaviorism, spiritualism, etc. We will focus on Russian Realists ideological and aesthetic struggle against Romantic values and on an unpredicted result of this struggle -- a final spectralization of social and political realities they claimed to mirror in their works. Paradoxically, Russian Realism contributed to the creation of the image of Russia as a house haunted by numerous apparitions: nihilism and revolution, afflicted peasants and perfidious Jews, secret societies and religious sects. The spectropoetics (Derrida) of Russian Realism will be examined through works of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Leskov, Chekhov, as well as paintings by Ilya Repin and operas by Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky. Requirements include one oral presentation, mid-term theoretical survey essay, and a final paper. Relevant theories include M.H. Abrams, Brookes, Levine, Greenblatt, Castle, and Derrida.

Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 541, RUSS 544
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 460 Post-Soviet Russia in Film
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. Film is arguably the most powerful medium for reflecting changes in modern society. This course will examine Russia's transition to democracy and market economy through the eyes of its most creative and controversial cinematographers. The course will focus on the often agonizing process of changing values and attitudes as the country moves from Soviet to Post-Soviet society. Russian films with English subtitles will be supplemented by readings from contemporary Russian media sources. The course provides an excellent visual introduction to the problems of contemporary Russia society.

Taught by: Bourlatskaya
One-term course offered either term
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 461 20th Century Russian Literature: Fiction and Reality
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. Russian 461 introduces the major movements and figures of twentieth-century Russian literature and culture, works of modern Russian writers, and feature films. In studying the poetry of Mayakovsky, Bloch, and Pasternak, students will become familiar with the important literary movements of the Silver Age. The reality of the Soviet era will be examined in the works of Zamyatin, Babel, and Zoshchenko. There will be a brief survey of the development of Soviet cinema, including films of Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, and Mikhalkov. Literary trends in the later Soviet period will be seen in war stories, prison-camp literature, village prose, and the writings of female authors of that time.

Taught by: Bourlatskaya
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 464 Haunted House: Russian Realism in European Context
This course is dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-45. Students will explore the cultural myth of the war, created in the 1960-80s. The materials will include literary texts, documentaries, photographs, and films. We will focus on three major themes of this myth: 1. moral strength and courage; 2. respect for Russia's military past; and 3. the rise of national consciousness.

Prerequisites: Prior language experience required.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
RUSS 464 Russian Humor
One of the most fascinating and most difficult things for a student of foreign culture is to understand national humor, as it is presented in various stories and films, jokes and shows. To an extent, humor is a gateway to national mentality. In the present course we will examine Russian cultural history, from the sixteenth through the twenty-first centuries, through the vehicle of Russian humor. How does Russian humor depend on religion and history? What was considered funny in various cultural trends? What are the peculiarities of Russian humorist tradition? Students will be familiarized with different Russian theories of humor (Bakhtin, Likhachev, Panchenko, Tynianov, etc.) and, of course, with a variety of works by Russian kings of humor Pushkin and Gogol, Chekhov and Zoshchenko, Bulgakov and Ilf and Petrov, Erófeev and Kibirov, etc. Class lectures will be supplemented by frequent video and musical presentations ranging from contemporary cartoons to high comedies and from comic songs (Chaliapins The Flea) to the music of Shostakovich (The Nose). This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language.
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 465 Singing in the Snow: The History of Russian Song
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. Song is an essential and exciting component of Russian culture and social life, and an important language learning tool. The course offers a general introduction to the history of Russian song. Students will explore the historical trajectory of Russian song and its various genres (from folk to the modern Estrada), examine the poetic and literary principles of song, discuss its aesthetic properties, and analyze the educational, community-building and ideological roles of song in Russian society. Among the wide-ranging topics and genres that we will discuss and work with are lyrics of folk songs, romances, Soviet and patriotic songs, Anti-Soviet songs, Russian/Soviet anthems, bard song, film and theater songs, childrens songs, Soviet and Russian Rock and Pop.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 466 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
This course is a content-based course intended for students who speak Russian at home and seek to improve their command of formal and professional registers of the Russian language. Paying tribute to the centennial of the Russian Revolution, the course examines the sociopolitical milestone of the 20th century through the works of literature, art, music, film, and material culture that both refracted the revolutionary situation and responded to the revolutionary change. The course's primary sources include works of Russian symbolist poets (e.g. Blok) and realist writers (e.g. Korolenko, Chekhov, Gorky, Andrei Platonov), the music of modernist composers, Soviet montage films, and the Soviet architecture of the International Style. The specific attention will be on the relationship between sociopolitical transformation and the rise of avant-garde movements in visual arts and poetry known as the artistic revolution (e.g. Khlebnikov, Maiakovskii, Kandinskii, Goncharova, Malevich, Chagall).
Taught by: Nazyrova
Course not offered every year
Prerequisite: RUSS361 or equivalent proficiency
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 467 Classic Russian Literature Today
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. A study of classic Russian literature in the original. Readings will consist of some of the greatest works of 19th and 20th-century authors, such as Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Bulgakov. Students will examine various forms and genres of literature, learn basic techniques of literary criticism, and explore the way literature is translated into film and other media. An additional focus of the course will be on examining the uses and interpretations of classic literature and elitist culture in contemporary Russian society. Observing the interplay of the "high" and "low" in Russian cultural tradition, students will develop methodology of cultural analysis.
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 468 Post-Soviet Russian Society: People, Business, Democracy
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. It offers an introduction to contemporary Russian society, its historical background and its present political and economic structure. The course will focus on the political, economic and sociological developments in Russia from Perestroika (late 1980s) to Putin. The course will discuss the society's changing values, older and younger generations, political parties and movements, elections, the business community and its relations with the government, common perceptions of Westerners and Western society, and the role of women in the family and at work. Emphasis will be placed on the examination, interpretation and explanation of peoples behavior and their perception of democracy and reforms, facilitating comparison of Western and Russian social experience.
Taught by: Bourlatskaya
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.
RUSS 469 Russian Utopia in Literature, Film, and Politics
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. In this course we will undertake a fascinating journey to the Dreamland of Russian culture. Students will read and discuss Russian utopian imagination as presented in a variety of literary texts, paintings, musical works, films, as well as philosophical texts and economic theories. Topics for discussion will include Russian fairy tales and legends, religious prophesies and communist projects, history and imagination, technological and patriarchal utopias.
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 471 Moscow: Cultural History
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. An extraordinary diverse city, Moscow has acquired a number of names, referring both to its size and role in the national history: The Third Rome, The Whitestone One, The First Throne, The Forty Forties, The Hero City, and even The Big Village. In this course, students will examine the cultural history of the great city from 1147 to the present. The "itinerary" for this imaginary trip will include the Kremlin and the banyas, Saint Basil's Cathedral and the Bolshoi Theater, the Ostankino Tower and the underground palaces of the Metro, the workers' canteen and the dining rooms of the posh restaurants, etc. The course discussions will be centered on literary texts, travelers' accounts, films, and works of art and architecture.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 475 Doctor Zhivago in Historical Context
Russian heritage students are invited to read in original and discuss in class one of the most unusual novels of 20th century Russian literature, Doctor Zhivago. In 1958, the author of this novel Boris Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize "for his important achievement both in contemporary lyrical poetry and in the field of the great Russian epic tradition," an event which enraged the Soviet government. Students will follow the main characters of this poetic saga in the most terrible and glorious moments of the Russian history, from the Russian Revolution of 1905 to the beginning of the Great War.
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 485 Russian Poetics
Introduction to the analysis of poetic texts, based on the works of Batyushkov, Lermontov, Tyutychev, Fet, Mandelshtam, and others.
Taught by: Steiner
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: COLL 224
Prerequisites: RUSS312, RUSS361 or comparable language competence
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: This course is open to all advanced students of Russian (including students who speak Russian at home).

RUSS 506 Pushkin
The writer's lyrics, narrative poems, and drama.
Taught by: Steiner
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisites: RUSS312, RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: This course is open to all students of Russian (including students who speak Russian at home)

RUSS 508 Advanced Russian for Business
This advanced language course focuses on developing effective oral and written communication skills for working in a Russian-speaking business environment. Students will discuss major aspects of Russian business today and learn about various Russian companies using material from the current Russian business press. In addition, students will be engaged in a number of creative projects, such as business negotiation simulations, and simulation of creating a company in Russia.
For BA Students: Advanced Language Course
Taught by: Bourlatskaya
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: At least one RUSS400-level course or comparable language competence.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 519 History of Russian Literary Language and Culture
This course examines the linguistic, literary, and social history of the Russian language from the medieval period to the modern day. Course topics include: the creation of the Slavic alphabets and the first literary language of the Slavs, Old Church Slavonic; the beginnings and development of writing and literacy in Old Russia; the evolution of the Russian literary language, its styles, and registers; grammatical categories of Russian; features of Russian lexicography; the social history and politics of language use; analysis of texts. Taught in Russian; readings in Russian & English; advanced language proficiency required.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Prerequisites: Any RUSS 400 level course or comparable proficiency.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 519 History of Russian Literary Language and Culture
This course examines the linguistic, literary, and social history of the Russian language from the medieval period to the modern day. Course topics include: the creation of the Slavic alphabets and the first literary language of the Slavs, Old Church Slavonic; the beginnings and development of writing and literacy in Old Russia; the evolution of the Russian literary language, its styles, and registers; grammatical categories of Russian; features of Russian lexicography; the social history and politics of language use; analysis of texts. Taught in Russian; readings in Russian & English; advanced language proficiency required.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Prerequisites: Any RUSS 400 level course or comparable proficiency.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 523 Russian Literary History
The history of modern Russian literature from the mid-19th century to the present. Taught by: Steiner
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 525 Russian Cultural History
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. An extraordinary diverse city, Moscow has acquired a number of names, referring both to its size and role in the national history: The Third Rome, The Whitestone One, The First Throne, The Forty Forties, The Hero City, and even The Big Village. In this course, students will examine the cultural history of the great city from 1147 to the present. The "itinerary" for this imaginary trip will include the Kremlin and the banyas, Saint Basil's Cathedral and the Bolshoi Theater, the Ostankino Tower and the underground palaces of the Metro, the workers' canteen and the dining rooms of the posh restaurants, etc. The course discussions will be centered on literary texts, travelers' accounts, films, and works of art and architecture.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 529 History of Russian Literary Language and Culture
This course examines the linguistic, literary, and social history of the Russian language from the medieval period to the modern day. Course topics include: the creation of the Slavic alphabets and the first literary language of the Slavs, Old Church Slavonic; the beginnings and development of writing and literacy in Old Russia; the evolution of the Russian literary language, its styles, and registers; grammatical categories of Russian; features of Russian lexicography; the social history and politics of language use; analysis of texts. Taught in Russian; readings in Russian & English; advanced language proficiency required.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Prerequisites: Any RUSS 400 level course or comparable proficiency.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 535 Modern Russian Literature
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. An extraordinary diverse city, Moscow has acquired a number of names, referring both to its size and role in the national history: The Third Rome, The Whitestone One, The First Throne, The Forty Forties, The Hero City, and even The Big Village. In this course, students will examine the cultural history of the great city from 1147 to the present. The "itinerary" for this imaginary trip will include the Kremlin and the banyas, Saint Basil's Cathedral and the Bolshoi Theater, the Ostankino Tower and the underground palaces of the Metro, the workers' canteen and the dining rooms of the posh restaurants, etc. The course discussions will be centered on literary texts, travelers' accounts, films, and works of art and architecture.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 536 History of Russian Literary Language and Culture
This course examines the linguistic, literary, and social history of the Russian language from the medieval period to the modern day. Course topics include: the creation of the Slavic alphabets and the first literary language of the Slavs, Old Church Slavonic; the beginnings and development of writing and literacy in Old Russia; the evolution of the Russian literary language, its styles, and registers; grammatical categories of Russian; features of Russian lexicography; the social history and politics of language use; analysis of texts. Taught in Russian; readings in Russian & English; advanced language proficiency required.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Prerequisites: Any RUSS 400 level course or comparable proficiency.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 545 Russian Poetics
Introduction to the analysis of poetic texts, based on the works of Batyushkov, Lermontov, Tyutychev, Fet, Mandelshtam, and others.
Taught by: Steiner
Course usually offered in fall term
Prerequisites: RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.

RUSS 565 Russian Literary History
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. An extraordinary diverse city, Moscow has acquired a number of names, referring both to its size and role in the national history: The Third Rome, The Whitestone One, The First Throne, The Forty Forties, The Hero City, and even The Big Village. In this course, students will examine the cultural history of the great city from 1147 to the present. The "itinerary" for this imaginary trip will include the Kremlin and the banyas, Saint Basil's Cathedral and the Bolshoi Theater, the Ostankino Tower and the underground palaces of the Metro, the workers' canteen and the dining rooms of the posh restaurants, etc. The course discussions will be centered on literary texts, travelers' accounts, films, and works of art and architecture.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 575 Russian Cultural History
This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. An extraordinary diverse city, Moscow has acquired a number of names, referring both to its size and role in the national history: The Third Rome, The Whitestone One, The First Throne, The Forty Forties, The Hero City, and even The Big Village. In this course, students will examine the cultural history of the great city from 1147 to the present. The "itinerary" for this imaginary trip will include the Kremlin and the banyas, Saint Basil's Cathedral and the Bolshoi Theater, the Ostankino Tower and the underground palaces of the Metro, the workers' canteen and the dining rooms of the posh restaurants, etc. The course discussions will be centered on literary texts, travelers' accounts, films, and works of art and architecture.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 585 Russian Poetics
Introduction to the analysis of poetic texts, based on the works of Batyushkov, Lermontov, Tyutychev, Fet, Mandelshtam, and others.
Taught by: Steiner
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: COLL 224
Prerequisites: RUSS312, RUSS361 or comparable language competence.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Conducted in Russian.
RUSS 528 From Late-Soviet to Non-Soviet Literature and Culture
The aims of this course are threefold: to introduce students to some signature literary and cultural texts form roughly the post-Stalin era to the present, to equip them with relevant theoretical approaches and concerns, and finally, to offer a space where they can develop their own research projects. A major theme will be the relations between "Russian" literature and history, in which literature is not only a mimesis of the historical process but often an active agent. Throughout, we will be particularly attentive to the periphery of literature. In the first place, this means an expanded geography, the inclusion of non-Russian Soviet and emigre writers before and after 1991, as well as an effort to theorize their structural position. Secondly, we will adopt the late Formalists' understanding of literary periphery as the genres, cultural forms, institutions, and phenomena that abutted the literary field and affected its processes. Depending on student interest, our attention to these objects of inquiry could be directed toward bardic song and the later lyric-centric Russian rock, samizdat and literary internet, thick journals and literary prizes, Soviet-era dissidence and today's protest culture.
Taught by: Platt
Also Offered As: COML 528
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 544 Haunted House: Russian Realism in European Context
In this class we will examine works of major Russian Realist writers, painters, and composers considering them within Western ideological contexts of the 1850-1880s: positivism, materialism, behaviorism, spiritualism, etc. We will focus on Russian Realists ideological and aesthetic struggle against Romantic values and on an unpredicted result of this struggle -- a final spectralization of social and political realities they claimed to mirror in their works. Paradoxically, Russian Realism contributed to the creation of the image of Russia as a house haunted by numerous apparitions: nihilism and revolution, afflicted peasants and perfidious Jews, secret societies and religious sects. The spectropoetics (Derrida) of Russian Realism will be examined through works of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Leskov, Chekhov, as well as paintings by Ilya Repin and operas by Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky. Requirements include one oral presentation, mid-term theoretical survey essay, and a final paper. Relevant theories include M.H. Abrams, Brookes, Levine, Greenblatt, Castle, and Derrida.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 541, RUSS 444
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 548 Borderland Literature and Minority Nationalism: The role of Central Asia in Russian-Iranian Relations
Advanced graduate course on Central Asian and Iranian literature and history. Particular attention is given to the role of literature in Tajik-Iranian cultural exchange, the culture and history of Persian-speaking minorities in late 19th and early 20th century Caucasus and Central Asia, and the relations between center and periphery. Theories concerning Orientalism, minority nationalism and subaltern studies are also examined.
Taught by: Yountchi
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 549 Stalinist Culture
In the Soviet Union in the late 1920s the dynamic cultural life of the revolutionary era, characterized by avant-gardism, experimentation, and diversity, gave way to a new organization of Soviet cultural life—one dominated by the newly formulated official style of "Socialist Realism" and bureaucratic institutions such as the Soviet Writers Union. In this course we will study the conditions that gave rise to this new era, its institutional realities, and masterworks in film, photography and literature of official art, including those by Kavelin, Pasternak and Eisenstein. We will also examine the social phenomena of cultural resistance and non-conformism of this period and its works written "for the drawer" or for non-official consumption, such as those of Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Bulgakov, Kharms and Druskin.
Taught by: Platt/Staff
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 550
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 555 History of Emotions: Russia and the West
One of the most eccentric heroes of Yuri Olesha's novel Envy (1927), contemplates a spectacular farewell parade of individual human emotions, rejected by the new, Soviet, collectivist regime: love, envy, friendship, etc. Clearly, the emotions for him have rhetorical, ideological, and historical nature. They can be legitimate and illegitimate, they extinct, like some species of animals and plants, they can be banned, and even violently annihilated by the government (along with the social groups, the collective subjectivity of which they express). To replace them, either naturally or by means of violence, "a new series of states of the human soul" must be installed. The hero believes that this historical process is inevitable, and the only thing the patriot of the old subjectivity can do is to organize a farewell procession of the departed emotional culture, a conspiracy of the doomed feelings. Yet, can the feelings, related to the "old" culture, be completely destroyed? Can they survive in some new, cryptic, forms? Do feelings have history? How do they influence history? Do "pure," "natural," emotions exist? How do political regimes control the emotional sincerity of their subjects? What is the role of emotions in the formation of certain cultural communities (a family in the age of sensibility, a circle of political conspirators, etc.)? What is the role of literature in cultivating and preserving certain emotional modes (styles, codes, or regimes)? How do people interpret and express their emotions in different periods and in different national traditions?
Also Offered As: COML 550
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 575 Russian History in Film
Also Offered As: CIMS 575
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

RUSS 618 Cultural History of Medieval Rus' (800-1700)
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Also Offered As: COML 621, HIST 620
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit