The information presented here is as of 10/17/2013.

RUSSIAN (Div. I)

Chair, Professor JANNEKE VAN DE STADT

Professors: CASSIDAY, GOLDBEIN**. Associate Professor: VAN DE STADT. Visiting Assistant Professor: LADYGINA. Teaching Associate: MATUNOVA

LANGUAGE STUDY

The department provides language instruction to enable the student to acquire all four linguistic skills: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing. Russian 101-W88-102 covers the basics of Russian grammar. Russian 151 through 252 offer additional instruction in grammar and provide extensive practice in reading and conversation.

STUDY ABROAD

The department encourages students desiring to attain fluency in Russian to spend a semester or year studying in Russia or one of the former Soviet republics. Students may apply to one of several approved foreign study programs. Russian 152 or the equivalent and junior standing are normally prerequisite for study abroad.

LITERATURE AND CULTURE IN TRANSLATION

The department regularly offers courses on Russian literature and culture in English for those students who have little or no knowledge of Russian, but who wish to become acquainted with the major achievements in Russian literary and cultural history.

THE CERTIFICATE IN RUSSIAN

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

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

Required Courses

101
102
151
152
one additional course conducted in Russian

Electives

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

THE MAJOR

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

Examples of appropriate courses in other departments are:

History 140 Fin-de-Siecle Russia: Cultural Splendor, Imperial Decay
History 240 Muscovy and the Russian Empire
History 241 The Rise of the Soviet Union
History 440 Reform, Revolution, Terror: Russia, 1900-1939
Sociology 332 Communism and its Aftermath

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

THE DEGREE WITH HONORS IN RUSSIAN

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

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

RUSS 101(F)-W88-102(S) Elementary Russian

An introduction to contemporary standard Russian, this course provides opportunities to acquire basic proficiency in all four language skills: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing, through intensive use of authentic written materials and a strong emphasis on the spoken word in all class activities. Greater emphasis is placed on writing in the second semester. For students who have studied Russian in secondary school, consultation with the instructor is required before registering for any Russian language course in the sequence 101 through 252.

Format: the class meets five hours a week. Requirements: active class participation, completion of all assignments, quizzes, tests, and a final exam.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 12). Credit granted only if both semesters are taken. Students electing this course are required to attend and pass the sustaining program write-up and oral component, and to take the sustaining program write-up and oral component.

First Semester: CASSIDAY
Second Semester: VAN DE STADT

RUSS 151(F), 152(S) Continuing Russian

This course develops all four skills-conversation, listening comprehension, reading, and composition-for students who have completed at least one year of college-level Russian. Coursework includes a systematic review of Russian grammar, as well as an examination of a variety of materials from Russian and Soviet culture, current events, and daily life. Intermediate students will concentrate on expanding their vocabulary, while more advanced students will focus on reading and writing about unabridged texts in Russian. Students who complete the yearlong sequence of RUSS 151 and RUSS 152 should be well prepared to undertake study abroad in Russia and are encouraged to do so. Each year this program is offered in the winter study period.

Format: the class meets five hours a week. Requirements: active class participation, completion of all assignments, quizzes, tests, and a final exam.

Prerequisites for 151: completion of at least one year of college-level Russian (RUSS 101-102) or permission of the instructor. Prerequisites for 152: RUSS 151 or permission of the instructor. No enrollment limit (expected: 6-10).

First Semester: CASSIDAY
Second Semester: VAN DE STADT

RUSS 203(F) 19th-Century Russian Literature in Translation (Same as COMP 203)

Whereas 18th-century Russian literature was largely derivative and imitative, 19th-century Russian literature—literature of The Golden Age—developed into a distinct national literature. It acquired its own style, developed along its own trajectory, and engaged with local social and political topics. This course will offer a survey of major works of Russian 19th-century fiction from Pushkin, the “father” of modern Russian literature, through Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov. Primary materials will be supplemented by readings in cultural and intellectual history (Chaadaev, Belinsky, Herzen, Pisarev, and Dobrolyubov) to help us better understand the milieu in which 19th-century Russian literature developed. The course will consist of short introductory lectures and discussions devoted to analyzing stylistic, cultural, and ideological ideologies of our primary texts. In addition to examining each author’s distinctive style and contribution to Russian and world literature, we will explore a number of critical themes that have come to define the 19th-century Russian intellectual discourse: the rise of the Russian Empire and its encounter with East and West; the haunting duality of Russian urban and rural life; and the role of the Russian nobility and intelligentsia in Russia’s cultural and socio–political transformation.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: include a short term paper, a midterm, and a final.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 30 (expected: 12). Preference given to students in Russian or Comparative Literature.

May not be taken on a pass/fail basis; not available for the Gaudino option.

Hour: 1:10-2:25 TF

LADYGINA

277
RUSS 204 Twentieth-Century Russian Literature: From Revolution to Perestroika (Same as COMP 204) (Not offered 2013-2014)

Whether despite or precisely because of the enormous historical and political turbulence in twentieth-century Russia, the intensity of its cultural life was equally unprecedented. Over the period of nearly seventy years, Russian literature went through a number of major stages that defined its poetics and ideology; the Silver Age and its decline; the Revolution and the rise of the official literary method; the exodus of Russian writers abroad in the 1920s; the birth of a new proletarian type, worshiped by Soviet authors and mocked by the anti-Soviet ones; the Second World War; the thaw and de-Stalinization, when the Gulag seemed to have floated to the surface; another wave of tightening of the regime during the “stagnation period,” the dissident movement and the Cold War; another mass emigration to Europe, Israel and the U.S.; and finally—the dissolution of the Soviet empire and the rise of Russian postmodernism. As we discuss these and other topics of twentieth-century Russian culture, we will find ourselves plunged into the mechanisms of literary humor and comicality (e.g., in Mikhail Zoshchenko’s short stories and Ilia and Petrik’s picturesque novel The Twelve Chairs), the elements of the supernatural (in Mikhail Bulgakov’s The Master and Margarita), the ways of how Russian writers portray urban space (e.g., Moscow, in Venedikt Erofeev’s Moscow to the End of the Line), and how Soviet history is reinvented when censorship is replaced with market economy (in Viktor Pelevin’s Generation P). Literary texts will be supplemented with occasional film screenings. All readings and discussions are in English.

Format: Requirements: class attendance and participation, weekly reading responses (pre-circulated among class members), one class presentation (15-20 minutes), and a term paper.


Hour: 2:33-3:50 MR

GOLDSTEIN

RUSS 208 Twentieth-Century Russian Art and the Birth of Abstraction (Same as ArtH 266) (Not offered 2013-2014)

Such revolutionary artistic movements as Cubo-Futurism, Suprematism, and Constructivism profoundly influenced the development of twentieth-century art throughout the Western world—giving the 1917 Russian Revolution upset the world’s political balance. This course will in Russia’s art within a cultural framework and explore the relationship between artistic production and politics. We will begin with a brief overview of important developments in Russian art that prefigured the twentieth-century artistic revolution: the introduction of icons from Byzantium, the founding of St. Petersburg and the rise of Western-style portraiture, and the font-de-se siècle movements that united painting with music and ballet. However, the focus of the course will be 1910-1930, when radical innovation was the order of the day and revolutionary ideas were the only new conceptions of art. We will then look at the Socialist Realist style of the Stalin era, Soviet dissident art and Moscow conceptualism, ending the semester with an exploration of current trends in post-Soviet Russian art.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: active class participation, weekly response papers, one 6-page paper, midterm and final exams, and participation in a communal feast.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). Preference given to students who can demonstrate an interest in Russian culture.

Hour: TBA

CASSIDAY

RUSS 210T Tolstoy: The Major Novels (Same as COMP 207T) (Not offered 2013-2014) (W)

This tutorial will focus on Lev Tolstoy’s four novelistic masterpieces—War and Peace, Anna Karenina, Resurrection, and Hadji Murat—placing them in their appropriate historical, social, and philosophical context. For each week of class, students will read a significant portion of a novel by Tolstoy, as well as a selection of secondary literature taken from those works that inspired the author, reactions that arose at the time of the novel’s publication, and scholarship that seeks to explain the power and enduring significance of these novels. Students will meet with the professor in pairs, with one student writing a five-page paper for each class session and the other student providing a critique of the paper. For those students without Russian language skills, all works will be read in English translation. For those students who have completed at least three years of college-level Russian, all primary readings, a significant portion of secondary readings, discussion, and writing assignments will be completed in Russian.

Format: tutorial. Evaluation will be based on completion of weekly reading and writing assignments and active discussion during tutorial sessions.

Prerequisite: reading the tutorial in English; one for students taking the tutorial in Russian: either RUSS 252 or the permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference given to Russian, Comparative Literature, and Literary Studies majors.

May not be taken as a pass/fail basis.

CASSIDAY

RUSS 222(F)

Hour: 8:30-9:45 MWF

TBA

RUSS 251(F), 252(S) Continuing Russian

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

Prerequisites for 251: RUSS 152 or permission of the instructor.

Prerequisites for 252: RUSS 251 or permission of the instructor.

Hour: 11:00-11:50 MWF First Semester: VAN DE STATDT

11:00-11:50 MWF Second Semester: CASSIDAY

RUSS 305 Dostoevsky and His Age (Same as COMP 305) (Not offered 2013-2014)

This course examines the life and works of Fyodor Dostoevsky in the context of Western intellectual history. Readings include Dostoevsky’s highly influential novellas Notes From Underground, his first major novel Crime and Punishment, and his masterpiece The Brother Karamazov. Over the course of the semester, we will discuss Dostoevsky’s age and society, examining the larger trends and problems reflected in his works: the triumph of St. Petersburg with their prostitutes, beggars, and moneylenders; widespread demands for social and political reform; psychological, philosophical, and religious debate. All readings will be in English.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: ability to complete lengthy reading assignments, class participation, three short papers, and a final synthetic assignment.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: none (expected: 20).

CASSIDAY

RUSS 306(S) Rise and Shine with Tolstoy (Same as COMP 306)

This course will examine the life and works of the great Russian writer Lev Tolstoy in the context of Western intellectual history. Readings will include Tolstoy’s two major novels, War and Peace and Anna Karenina, as well as a number of shorter works, such as The Cossacks and The Death of Ivan Ilych. We will also examine some of Tolstoy’s aesthetic and didactic works. All readings will be in English.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: timely completion of all reading assignments, active class participation, three short papers, an oral presentation, and a final research project.

No prerequisites. No enrollment limit (expected: 20).

Hour: 8:30-9:45 MW

RUSS 331T(S) The Brothers Karamazov (Same as COMP 331T and ENGL 371T) (W)

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

Format: tutorial. Requirements: based on completion of weekly reading and writing assignments, as well as active engagement during tutorial sessions.

Prerequisites: at least one 200-level literature class. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference given to students majoring or considering a major in Russian, Comparative Literature, or English.

May not be taken on a pass/fail basis; not available for the Gaudino option.

Hour: TBA

CASSIDAY

RUSS 343(F) Spectacles on His Nose and Autumn on His Heart: The Oeuvre of Isaac Babel (Same as COMP 343, JWST 343 and INST 343) (W) (D)

Known alternately as “master of the short story” and “Russian Maupassant,” Isaac Babel was not only one of the most celebrated and intriguing authors of early Soviet Russia, but also a cultural figure of profound national and international significance. For a number of reasons (political, aesthetic, professional, ethical) Babel was not prolific and this will allow us to read almost all of his creative output, something we rarely get to do in the course of a single semester. Babel’s writing is extremely varied—it includes sketches,
journalistic prose, short stories, plays, movie scripts, one unfinished novel—and richly intertextual. This will afford us the opportunity to read the work of some of his contemporaries and predecessors, from both Russia and abroad, with whom he fashioned brilliant literary conversations, among them Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekhov, Sholem Aleichem, and Ivan Turgenev. Babel saw self-definition as the core of his writing and as an EDI offering, this course will ask students to reflect on what it meant to be a Russian, a Jew, and a non-party author—an outsider, insider, and problematic hybrid rolled into one—in the highly unsettled, and unsettling, 1920s and 1930s. All course readings will be in translation, but students are highly encouraged to read in the original (Russian, French, Yiddish) whenever possible.

Format: seminar. Requirements: based on active class participation, frequent short writing assignments, a final project, and an oral presentation.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 12 (expected: 10), Preference given to Russian and Comparative Literature majors, Jewish Studies and International Studies concentrators.

Hour: 8:30–9:45 MW

RUSS 401(F) Senior Seminar: Representations of the Caucasus in Russian Literature and Film (W)

Media coverage of the recent Chechen wars and terrorists acts in Moscow has exposed the troubled relationship between Russia and the Caucasus, a conflict that is hundreds of years old. Over the past two centuries, Russian writers and filmmakers have addressed this tension in central works of poetry, prose, and film. This course offers a survey of the most emblematic representations of the Caucasus in Russian cultural productions of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. We will focus on literary works by Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Esenin, Mayakovsky, Pristavkin, Pelevin, and Politkovskaya, and will analyze a number of relevant films—Kidnapping, Caucasian Style (1966); The Color of Pomegranates (1968); Prisoner of the Caucasus (1996); War (2002); and Aleksandra (2007). We will strive to investigate how the Russian writers and filmmakers have used the image of the Caucasian Other to address the issue of Russia’s self-representation, and to what degree contemporary Russian artists have transformed the image of the Caucasians compared to the Romantic period. The course will be conducted entirely in Russian. All readings and viewings will be in Russian.

Format: seminar. Requirements: consist of four short essays, a conference-style presentation, and a final paper.

Prerequisites: Russian 251, 252 or consent of instructor. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 4), Preference given to Russian Majors. May not be taken on a Pass/Fail basis; not available for the Gaudino option.

Hour: 9:55–11:10 TR

RUSS 493(F)-W31-494(S) Senior Thesis

RUSS 497(F), 498(S) Independent Study