

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES

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The Russian Language and Area Studies Department, in keeping with the college mission to provide a “global perspective,” offers a variety of courses that build upon Russian language proficiency to give students the knowledge and tools for a successful career. Recent graduates have entered professions in higher education, business, government, the church, law, and the arts.

Russia continues to be a major player in the global community in many areas: politics, economics, space-age technology, and the development of new computer software. As the new Russia opens itself to the outside, college graduates are increasingly sought after for positions in government service, business and investment, journalism, environmental studies, education, and social service.

The department offers a major in Russian area studies and a major in Russian language, as well as courses on Russian literature taught in English. Taking Russian at St. Olaf means more than just studying a language. The study of Russian introduces you to one of the great cultures of the world — the culture of Tchaikovsky, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Kandinsky, Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn, and many others. Russian language is the key to reading more than one-fourth of all the published scientific literature in the world.

Students may satisfy OLE Core curriculum requirements with Russian studies courses such as RUSSN 265 Introduction to Russian and Soviet Film (in English translation). RUSSN 231 or a higher numbered course taught in the Russian language or demonstrated proficiency satisfies the world language requirement for all students. Upper-level students may participate in the CIEE program in St. Petersburg, or with St. Olaf programs in Novgorod and Irkutsk (Siberia).

Overview of the Majors

The Russian Language and Area Studies Department offers two majors: Russian language and Russian area studies. The aim of both is to prepare students to understand, interact with, and work in the Russian area from a foundation of cultural literacy. The multidisciplinary Russian area studies major provides students with a comprehensive view of the culture, history, and contemporary problems of the area.

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Majors

Requirements

Requirements for the Major in Russian Language

Code	Title	Credits
RUSSN 111	Beginning Russian I	1.00
RUSSN 112	Beginning Russian II	1.00
RUSSN 231	Intermediate Russian I	1.00

RUSSN 232	Intermediate Russian II	1.00
RUSSN 251	Conversation and Composition	1.00
RUSSN 254	Russian Culture and Civilization	1.00
RUSSN 372	Topics in Contemporary Russian Society	1.00
Two additional courses taught in Russian, normally taken in Russia during senior year		2.00
Total Credits		9

**By completing this major, the student also satisfies the OLE Core Writing in the Major requirement.*

Requirements for the Major in Russian Area Studies

Code	Title	Credits
Russian language courses ¹		
RUSSN 111	Beginning Russian I	1.00
RUSSN 112	Beginning Russian II	1.00
RUSSN 231	Intermediate Russian I	1.00
RUSSN 232	Intermediate Russian II	1.00
Select five of the following political science, history, literature, or film courses approved for Russian language and area studies credit: ²		5.00
HIST 231	People and Power in Soviet Russia	
PSCI 282	Russian and Eurasian Politics	
RUSSN 250	Topics in Russian Literature (in English translation)	
RUSSN 251	Conversation and Composition	
RUSSN 254	Russian Culture and Civilization	
RUSSN 256	Theater in Russia: January Term Study Abroad	
RUSSN 261	The Golden Age of Russian Literature (in English Translation)	
RUSSN 262	20th-Century Russian Literature (in English translation)	
RUSSN 265	Introduction to Russian and Soviet Film (in English translation)	
RUSSN 371	Dostoevsky (in English translation)	
RUSSN 372	Topics in Contemporary Russian Society	
Senior project ³		
Total Credits		9

¹

A minimum of four semesters of Russian language is required, though more is encouraged.

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For students who are not simultaneously working toward the Russian language major, two advanced Russian language courses (RUSSN 251, RUSSN 254) may be counted toward the Russian area studies major.

3

This may be taken for course credit as RUSSN 398 Independent Research. Guidelines are available from the department chair. The project is due on April 15.

**By completing this major, the student also satisfies the OLE Core Writing in the Major requirement.*

Courses

RUSSN 111: *Beginning Russian I*

This course offers an introduction to grammar and reading through oral and written work. Offered annually in the fall semester.

RUSSN 112: *Beginning Russian II*

This course offers an introduction to grammar and reading through oral and written work. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisite: RUSSN 111 or equivalent.

RUSSN 124: *The Russian World*

This course introduces students to Russian culture and civilization from its beginning to the present. Students will gain a general understanding of Russia and will be introduced to her history, art, literature, political systems, music, society, geography, religions, etc. No prerequisites.

RUSSN 231: *Intermediate Russian I*

Students continue their grammar, oral, and written work with an emphasis on conversation and reading selections from classical and contemporary Russian authors. Offered annually in the fall semester.

Prerequisite: RUSSN 112 or equivalent.

RUSSN 232: *Intermediate Russian II*

Students continue their grammar, oral, and written work with an emphasis on conversation and reading selections from classical and contemporary Russian authors. Class meets four times weekly. Offered annually in the spring semester. Also counts toward business and management studies concentration.

Prerequisite: RUSSN 231 or equivalent.

RUSSN 250: *Topics in Russian Literature (in English translation)*

This course examines the development of differing approaches to some aspect of Russian life and culture as presented in the classical texts of Russian literature. Actual topics vary according to year and instructor. Offered periodically. Counts toward Russian area studies major; does not count toward Russian language major.

Prerequisites: WRIT 120, equivalent or permission of the instructor.

RUSSN 251: *Conversation and Composition*

This course facilitates oral and written use of the language through conversation and composition, English to Russian translation, selections from Russian literature, and original themes. Offered annually in the fall semester. Counts toward Russian area studies major for students not simultaneously working toward Russian language major; also counts toward business and management studies concentration.

Prerequisite: RUSSN 232 or permission of instructor.

RUSSN 254: *Russian Culture and Civilization*

This survey of Russian culture and civilization uses original Russian texts on history, the arts, religion, and education, as well as documentary films and selections from literature. The course fosters the acquisition of the language of Russian cultural and intellectual discourse. Offered annually in the spring semester. Counts toward Russian area studies major for students not simultaneously working toward Russian language major; also counts toward business and management studies concentration.

Prerequisite: RUSSN 251 or permission of the instructor.

RUSSN 256: *Theater in Russia: January Term Study Abroad*

Students study theater through the readings and attend approximately twenty productions, group discussions, lectures, and tours. Students focus on the staging, acting and audience reactions in the productions. Texts and all lectures are in English. Students look at Russian and Western classics and a variety of theatrical styles from opera to puppet theater. Offered periodically during January Term. Apply through Smith Center for Global Engagement. Counts toward Russian area studies major; does not count toward Russian language major.

RUSSN 261: *The Golden Age of Russian Literature (in English Translation)*

This course explores a remarkable period of literary history: Russia's 19th century or the "golden age" of Russian literature. In rapid succession, Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov produced one masterpiece after another, dazzling Western audiences and shaping the modern mind. Beyond the arts, diverse fields - philosophy, theology, psychology, political science - have been influenced by the Russian classics. Topics include doubt, nihilism, despair, faith, God, death, and the meaning of life. Taught in English. Offered alternate years. Counts toward Russian area studies major; does not count toward Russian language major.

RUSSN 262: *20th-Century Russian Literature (in English translation)*

This course traces the development of Russian literature from the end of the 19th century to the present. A variety of genres are studied, including the novel, the short story, drama, and lyric poetry. Major authors include: Chekhov, Akhmatova, Bulgakov, Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn, and Nabokov. Taught in translation. Offered alternate years. Counts toward Russian area studies major; does not count toward Russian language major.

RUSSN 265: *Introduction to Russian and Soviet Film (in English translation)*

This course considers masterworks of Russian and Soviet cinema from the Bolshevik revolution to the present. Students examine significant Russian contributions to world cinema. Readings and topics include basic cinema analysis, Russian cinema criticism, and Russian film theory. Offered alternate years. Counts toward Russian area studies and film and media studies majors and film and media studies concentration; does not count toward Russian language major.

RUSSN 294: *Academic Internship*

RUSSN 298: *Independent Study*

RUSSN 371: *Dostoevsky (in English translation)*

Students read and discuss Dostoevsky's major novels from Poor Folk through Brothers Karamazov. Offered alternate years. Counts toward Russian area studies major; does not count toward Russian language major.

RUSSN 372: Topics in Contemporary Russian Society

This course covers a variety of topics that are both culturally and intellectually challenging. The goal of this course is to explore a variety of topics significant for Russian society and culture as well as to further develop the language of intellectual discourse through the treatment of complex issues in the press and social media. Taught in Russian. May be repeated if topic is different. Offered annually in the spring semester. Counts toward Russian area studies major for students not simultaneously working toward Russian language major; also counts toward business and management studies concentration.

Prerequisite: RUSSN 254 or permission of the instructor.

RUSSN 394: Academic Internship**RUSSN 396: Directed Undergraduate Research**

This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course.

Prerequisite: determined by individual instructor.

RUSSN 398: Independent Research

Independent Research is required for all students seeking credit for a senior project.

Faculty

Director, 2023-2024**Maxwell Parlin**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian Language and Area Studies

Chair, 2023-2024**Corliss G. Swain**

Professor of Philosophy

Hume; philosophy of mind; metaphysics; feminism; history of modern philosophy

Anna K. Kuxhausen

Professor of History and Russian Language and Area Studies

Russian history; women's history

Anna Pearce

Visiting Instructor of Russian Language and Area Studies