

# Russian

Website: Russian (<https://new.sewanee.edu/programs-of-study/russian/>)

Russia retains its significance as the meeting point of East and West. Designated as a critical language by the United States Department of State, Russian is a powerful tool in a swiftly changing world. As the fifth most widely spoken language in the world (with over 277 million speakers), one of the six languages of the United Nations, and the *lingua franca* for much of Central Europe and Central Asia, Russian is a language of undeniable importance.

Whether you decide to study Russian because of its rich history, Nobel Prize winners, current sociopolitical configuration and G-8 membership, development of democratic institutions, growing role in business and the energy sector, or efforts to combat global terrorism; because of its immense influence on dance, drama, film, literature, mathematics, music, physics, and many other disciplines; because of family heritage; or because of curiosity about Russia's language, people and culture, you can expect a thorough and engaging education offered in Russian at Sewanee.

## Russian House

Students may consider residing in the Russian house in order to maximize opportunities for conversation with a native speaker of Russian. All students are encouraged to attend co-curricular and extracurricular events such as the weekly Russian table, Russian tea, Russian film screenings, and other cultural activities.

## Faculty

Associate Professor: Preslar (Chair)

Assistant Professor: Weygandt

## Major

### Requirements for the Major in Russian

The major requires successful completion of the following:

Code	Title	Semester Hours
<b>Course Requirements <sup>1</sup></b>		
RUSN 301	Advanced Russian	4
RUSN 309 or RUSN 310	Russian Culture: Study Abroad Russian Civilization	4
Select at least three of the following to demonstrate proficiency in the language:		12
RUSN 302	Readings in Russian Literature	
RUSN 303	Introduction to Russian Verse	
RUSN 304	Contemporary Russian in Cultural Context	
RUSN 305	Representations of the Caucasus in Russian Literature and Film	
RUSN 311	Composition and Conversation	
RUSN 312	Advanced Russian Language through Late-Soviet and Contemporary Film	
RUSN 402	Advanced Russian through Contemporary Literature and Society	
RUSN 405	Capstone Project and Seminar in Advanced Russian	
Select at least two of the following to demonstrate proficiency in the literary and film canon:		8
RUSN 351	19th-Century Russian Literature in English Translation	
RUSN 352	20th-Century Russian Literature in English Translation	
RUSN 354	Real Men, Real Women? Gender in 20th and 21st-Century Russian Literature and Culture	
RUSN 355	Russian and Soviet Film	
RUSN 356	Nabokov and Émigré Literature in 3D	
RUSN 358	Gender Revolutions and Countercultures in Film and Literature after Stalin	4
RUSN 361	Tolstoy in English Translation	
RUSN 362	Dostoevsky in English Translation	
RUSN 363	Environmental Literature and the History of Science and Ecocide in the USSR	

RUSN 364	Post-Soviet Literature, Theatre, and Performance Art	
HIST 383	Before and After 1989 in Russian, Ukrainian, and East European Cinema and History	
Select one additional course from the previous two lists		4
<b>Total Semester Hours</b>		<b>36</b>

Code	Title	Semester Hours
------	-------	----------------

#### Additional Requirements

A comprehensive examination

1

Majors are strongly encouraged to participate in a semester or summer study abroad program in Russia or Eurasia.

### Honors

The requirements for honors in Russian are: a) a minimum of a B+ average in courses offered for the major, b) demonstrated excellence on the comprehensive examination, and c) presentation of an outstanding honors thesis during the senior year.

### Minor

#### Requirements for the Minor in Russian

The minor requires successful completion of the following:

Code	Title	Semester Hours
<b>Course Requirements</b>		
RUSN 309 or RUSN 310	Russian Culture: Study Abroad Russian Civilization	4
Select at least two courses from the following:		8
RUSN 302	Readings in Russian Literature	
RUSN 303	Introduction to Russian Verse	
RUSN 304	Contemporary Russian in Cultural Context	
RUSN 305	Representations of the Caucasus in Russian Literature and Film	
RUSN 311	Composition and Conversation	
RUSN 312	Advanced Russian Language through Late-Soviet and Contemporary Film	
RUSN 401	The 19th Century	
RUSN 402	Advanced Russian through Contemporary Literature and Society	
Select two additional courses in Russian (RUSN) numbered 300 or above		8
<b>Total Semester Hours</b>		<b>20</b>

### Courses

#### Russian Courses

##### RUSN 103 Elementary Russian I (4)

An introduction to the fundamentals of the language and culture with emphasis on communicative proficiency, clarity of pronunciation and basic skills in reading, writing, and conversation. Use of language laboratory required. Four hours of class each week, plus an additional conversation meeting with a native speaker.

##### RUSN 104 Elementary Russian II (4)

An introduction to the fundamentals of the language and culture with emphasis on communicative proficiency, clarity of pronunciation and basic skills in reading, writing, and conversation. Use of language laboratory required. Four hours of class each week, plus an additional conversation meeting with a native speaker. *Prerequisite: RUSN 103 or placement.*

##### RUSN 151 Russian Language Abroad (4)

Intensive language study completed as an essential part of the Sewanee Summer in Russia program. Emphasis in the course is on speaking and writing. With departmental approval, a student who completes this course may be eligible for higher level placement in Russian language, or, in the case of a student who has already completed RUSN 301, may count the course toward the Russian major or minor. *Prerequisite: Only open to students admitted to the Summer in Russia program.*

**RUSN 203 Intermediate Russian (4)**

Continued study of grammar and review of basic grammatical structures; readings in Russian with emphasis on acquisition of vocabulary and continued development of conversational and writing skills. Four hours of class each week, plus an additional conversation meeting with a native speaker. *Prerequisite: RUSN 104 or placement.*

**RUSN 205 The Russian Short Story (4)**

The Russian Short Story, from ancient legends, tales, and fables, through diverse literary movements of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, has been a stable tool for Russian writers to explore ethical, aesthetic, and social questions. Students will grapple with these big ideas expressed in miniature format. Students also will study the craft of writing and cultivate skills of perception, observation, critical thinking, and clear communication. Readings will include: Karamzin, Pushkin, Lermontov, Leskov, Ostrovsky, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Zamyatin, Bulgakov, Teffi, Babel, Kharmis, Nabokov, Bunin, Olesha, Platonov, Zoshenko, Gorky, Tolstaya, Shukshin, Sorokin, Dovlatov, and Pelevin.

**RUSN 206 Eastern European Cinema: A Trajectory from Soviet to Post-Soviet Identity Independence (4)**

This class is a survey of Eastern European cinema from the 1960s until the present day. We will look at films and directors from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, Russia, and the former Yugoslavia. Despite state control, the filmmakers of Communist Europe were often more bold, honest, and provocative than their profit-driven Hollywood counterparts. By drawing on political and cultural discourses, the course will offer pointed analyses of the most significant East European films that touch upon issues of ethnicity, gender, cultural identity, and censorship. Films screened with English subtitles.

**RUSN 301 Advanced Russian (4)**

Completion of grammar; intensive readings from authentic materials in Russian with emphasis on continued development of conversational and writing skills. Required weekly conversation meeting with a native speaker. *Prerequisite: RUSN 203 or placement.*

**RUSN 302 Readings in Russian Literature (4)**

Short literary and cultural readings from various authors, periods, and genres. Relevant grammatical structures and stylistics are studied along with the readings. *Prerequisite: RUSN 301 or placement.*

**RUSN 303 Introduction to Russian Verse (4)**

An introduction to Russian verse with emphasis on further development of vocabulary and grammatical skills. Close readings of the texts will be augmented by lectures and supplementary material concerning the creative context that gave birth to them. Attention will also be given to poetic translation in theory and practice and to varying approaches to literary scholarship. All readings are in Russian. *Prerequisite: RUSN 301 or placement.*

**RUSN 304 Contemporary Russian in Cultural Context (4)**

Students engage in advanced study of contemporary standard Russian by examining issues relevant to current Russian society. Special attention is devoted to post-Soviet Russian culture through analysis of newspapers and television news, selections of recent prose fiction, and cinema. The course emphasizes problems of syntax and idiomatic Russian. *Prerequisite: RUSN 301 or placement.*

**RUSN 305 Representations of the Caucasus in Russian Literature and Film (4)**

Students engage in advanced Russian language study by examining the most emblematic representations of the Caucasus in Russian cultural productions of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Works by Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Pristavkin, Pelevin, and Politkovskaya, alongside several relevant films, feature as the center of the course. Students examine how 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. *Prerequisite: RUSN 301.*

**RUSN 309 Russian Culture: Study Abroad (4)**

Selected topics in Russian culture: architecture, film, fine arts, literature, music, theatre and dance. The course is taught in English and does not satisfy the foreign language requirement. The course is taught in English. *Prerequisite: Only open to students admitted to the Summer in Russia program.*

**RUSN 310 Russian Civilization (4)**

An historical, cultural, and linguistic survey of Russian civilization and culture from its ancient proto-Slavic beginnings to the present. The course is taught in English.

**RUSN 311 Composition and Conversation (4)**

Emphasis on communicative ability in contemporary written and spoken Russian. Intensive practice in conversation to develop language skills appropriate to various spheres of academic, business, and social life. Audio-visual materials will be used extensively. *Prerequisite: RUSN 301.*

**RUSN 312 Advanced Russian Language through Late-Soviet and Contemporary Film (4)**

Students engage in advanced Russian language study by viewing, discussing, and writing about films and about Russian and Soviet culture. Emphasis is on increased linguistic and cultural proficiency, including refinement of oral and written Russian with focused study of selected grammatical and stylistic topics. *Prerequisite: RUSN 301 or placement.*

**RUSN 340 Reading Russian (1)**

With a goal of improving reading proficiency in Russian, this course focuses on strategies for efficiently deciphering sophisticated texts, reviews grammar, and explores the art of translation from Russian into English. This course can be repeated twice for credit. *Open only to students pursuing programs in Russian. Prerequisite: RUSN 203.*

**RUSN 350 The Classic Russian Novel (4)**

A study of the Russian novel's development from early nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, with special attention to cultural studies and critique. Novels by Pushkin, Lermontov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Pasternak are the primary course texts. Topics of particular interest include the superfluous man and Russian Byronic hero, Russian Romanticism, representations of St. Petersburg, Russian intellectual history, and problems of literary translation. The course is taught in English.

**RUSN 351 19th-Century Russian Literature in English Translation (4)**

A study of the emergence and development of the Russian literary tradition in the nineteenth century, with special attention to the intersection of Russian history and literature. Novels, novellas and short stories by Pushkin, Karamzin, Lermontov, Dostoevsky, Durova, Leskov, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov and others feature as the center of the course. The course is taught in English.

**RUSN 352 20th-Century Russian Literature in English Translation (4)**

During the twentieth century, Russian literature transformed itself many times, evolving through prescriptive literary norms, a renewed interest in "truth-telling", and experimentation with form and subject matter. Students analyze examples of the avant-garde, Socialist Realism, experimental prose, the literature of emigration, youth prose, urban prose, Gulag literature, and dystopian literature. The course is taught in English.

**RUSN 354 Real Men, Real Women? Gender in 20th and 21st-Century Russian Literature and Culture (4)**

An exploration of the contentious topic of gender in a Russian context through the examination of an array of representations of masculinity and femininity in Russian prose, poetry and film of the twentieth century. Students assess what it means and has meant to be a Russian man or woman; in the process, they may challenge some Western assumptions about gender constructs. Through analyzing and identifying the characteristics of ideal/real men and women, the course considers how and whether gender stereotypes are reinforced in the works of contemporary authors. The course is taught in English.

**RUSN 355 Russian and Soviet Film (4)**

A survey of Russian cinema from the 1920's to the present day. The course approaches the analysis of film from the perspective of technique and methods, form, content, and cultural context. Students acquire a cinematic vocabulary while studying the genesis of Russian cinema, montage, propaganda films and socialist realism, nationalism, Stalinism, thaw and stagnation, glasnost, the post-Soviet period, and the enormous Russian and Soviet impact on world cinema. Films by Vertov, Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Mikhalkov, Muratova, and others are studied. The course is taught in English.

**RUSN 356 Nabokov and Émigré Literature in 3D (4)**

This course explores Vladimir Nabokov's literary output, criticism, and film adaptations of his novels. To understand Nabokov's aesthetics and situate him in the context of world literature, students will investigate the author's approach to several themes, such as reality, the construction of the author within the text, literary translation, emigration, and transformation. Students will also situate Nabokov among his émigré contemporaries, focusing on digitized resources from the author's Berlin and American periods. The course is taught in English.

**RUSN 358 Gender Revolutions and Countercultures in Film and Literature after Stalin (4)**

The primary focus of this course is to introduce students to signature literary and cultural texts from the post-Stalin era to the present. The quintessential trends of Russian literature and culture of the past several decades include the collapse of Soviet identity, and with it searches for national identity, contesting ideas of gender, and attempts to capture Post-Soviet transition through documentary film and the documentary in literature. These topics connect to social critique, dissidence, counterculture, and their literary and cinematic products.

**RUSN 361 Tolstoy in English Translation (4)**

The course surveys Tolstoy's two masterworks, *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*; shorter novellas such as *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, and *Master and Man*; and provides an introduction to the author's writings on topics such as education and art. Students move toward an understanding of Tolstoy as a novelist and thinker and situate him within broader literary, social and intellectual traditions. The course is taught in English.

**RUSN 362 Dostoevsky in English Translation (4)**

The course surveys the major novels of Fyodor Dostoevsky, including *Crime and Punishment*, *Notes from Underground*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and others. In examining Dostoevsky's reputation and legacy as a psychological novelist, the course explores the author's treatment of politics, religion, philosophy, and ethics. This course is taught in English.

**RUSN 363 Environmental Literature and the History of Science and Ecocide in the USSR (4)**

A study of representations of the natural world in selected Russian and Soviet texts and images. Students examine the development of nineteenth-century pastoralism and nature writing, emergent environmentalism, Stalinist industrialization, and the threat of environmental decimation (exemplified by the Chernobyl disaster) in the twentieth century and beyond. Topics explored include the political appropriation of natural motifs; ecology, nationalism, and national identity; totalitarian culture and the environment; health, food, and ethics; "hero projects" glorifying technological achievement and the mastery of nature; and demographic crisis. This course is taught in English.

**RUSN 364 Post-Soviet Literature, Theatre, and Performance Art (4)**

This course examines the relationship between individuals and the state in Putin's Russia. Students analyze a variety of texts -- fiction, cinema, journalism, and popular culture -- dealing with the chaos of the "wild 1990s," Putin's subsequent solidification of power, and the rise of a prominent protest culture. A special area of focus is the EuroMaidan revolution and the ongoing "hybrid war" in the Donbas, Ukraine. This course is taught in English.

**RUSN 365 Multicultural Russia: Race, Ethnicity, and Narrative in Russian Literature and Culture (4)**

This course explores the major works by authors representing many ethnic minorities in the territory of modern Russia, as well as works by writers from former Russian and Soviet colonies. Organized around four major regions—Ukraine, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East—the primary texts are examined through several angles. Texts are analyzed for their rhetorical and poetic effects, the historical and political contexts in which literary discourses surrounding questions of ethnicity, culture, and race develop, and the conditions under which they are marketed to, or suppressed from, different groups of readers. This course is taught in English.

**RUSN 401 The 19th Century (4)**

A study of short prose in Russian from the 19th century. Authors studied may include (but are not limited to) Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Chekhov. *Prerequisite: One course in Russian numbered 300 or higher.*

**RUSN 402 Advanced Russian through Contemporary Literature and Society (4)**

A study of 20th- and 21st-century Russian prose and media, including podcasts, television, and written news, emphasizing advanced linguistic and cultural proficiency. Authors studied may include (but are not limited to) Evgenii Grishkovets, Alisa Ganieva, and some excerpts from Tatiana Tolstaya and Viktor Pelevin. *Prerequisite: One course in Russian numbered 300 or higher.*

**RUSN 405 Capstone Project and Seminar in Advanced Russian (4)**

Shared readings in the Russian language on key topics that connect to students' interests: politics, society, film, environmental studies, economics, culture, literature, media, etc. Each student also engages in research on a topic of their interest and choosing, culminating in a research essay and an oral presentation. This seminar prepares students for the rigorous Russian comprehensive exam while continuing to hone advanced Russian communication skills. *Prerequisite: RUSN 301 or placement.*

**RUSN 440 Advanced Readings (2 or 4)**

Variable topics for students who need to complete reading in a particular area. This course may be repeated for credit when the topic differs. *Open only to students pursuing majors in Russian. Prerequisite: Instructor prerequisite override required.*

**RUSN 444 Independent Study (2 or 4)**

For selected students. This course may be repeated for credit when the topic differs. *Prerequisite: Instructor prerequisite override required.*