

RUSSIAN LITERATURE (RUSSL)

RUSSL 2001 - Russian Jews and Jewish Russians in Literature and Film (3 Credits)

Crosslisted with JWST 2001

Explore the ways of 19th to 21st century Russian Jewry through survey of literature and film. Learn about life in Russia from the perspective of Jewish and Russian-Jewish writers as well as through portrayal of Russian Jews in works of prominent Russian authors in the context of period. Selected works of Pushkin and Chekhov, Gogol and Sholom Aleichem, Pasternak and Yevtushenko will help create a multidimensional picture of the political and socio-cultural environment in which processes of integration and assimilation, both imposed and impeded by the state, shaped the identity of the modern-day Russian Jews in their deep, inherent connection to the Russian culture and often complicated relationship with their roots, which characteristically distinguishes them from their American contemporaries.

Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Fall 2022

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 2150 - Russian Culture, History, and Politics through Film (3 Credits)

This survey course will introduce you to various aspects of Russian culture as a formative force of national identity in a broad historical, geopolitical and socioeconomic context of 20-21st century post-imperial, Soviet, and post-soviet Russia. A selection of iconic works of Russian filmmakers will offer you a unique perspective of people's lives, aspirations, hopes and struggles throughout the nation's turbulent history - revolutions and Civil war, Stalin's era and World War II, the political thaw and stagnation, perestroika, the breakdown of the USSR, and full of uncertainties post-soviet era. Reading assignments may include poetry, short stories, historical commentary, and film criticism.

Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2022, Spring 2020

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 2158 - St. Petersburg and the Making of Modern Russia (4 Credits)

Crosslisted with HIST 2158, SHUM 2158

Founded by Peter the Great in the early eighteenth century, St. Petersburg was built expressly to advertise the triumph of enlightened absolutism at home and to display Russia's status as a major European power abroad. But for all of its neo-classical splendor, the image of imperial St. Petersburg has been consistently invoked as a critical touchstone for the expression of political discontent, social unease and spiritual anxiety. The most modern and intentional of Russian cities, Russia's northern capital has come to stand for everything that's wrong with modern life. In this seminar, we will approach St. Petersburg as a cultural text composed by an illustrious trio of Russian writers who saw the complicated history of their country through Peter's window to the west – Nikolai Gogol, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Andrei Bely.

Distribution Requirements: (HA-AG), (HST-AS)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Fall 2020

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 2500 - Demons and Witches in Russian Literature and Film (3 Credits)

A paranoid husband believes that his wife is a witch. A man rejects vehemently the very idea of the Devil's existence, unwittingly doing so right in his face. From outright horrifying to eerily funny, always dangerous, but at times benevolent, demons, witches, and other mysterious and elusive creatures of Russian lore inhabit people's imagination and figure prominently in a number of Russian books and films. In this course, we will read and discuss fairy tales, pieces of poetry, short stories, and one of the greatest novels in Russian twentieth century literature. We will also watch several feature and animated films.

Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Spring 2023, Spring 2021, Spring 2019

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 3331 - Introduction to Russian Poetry (3 Credits)

The nineteenth century was the first great age of Russian poetry - beginning with Pushkin's predecessors, continuing through Lermontov, and ending with Tiutchev and Fet and anticipations of modernism. In this course you'll learn how to read short poems carefully, you'll expand and deepen your understanding of the Russian language, and you'll gain insight into one of the world's major literary traditions.

Prerequisites: proficiency in Russian or permission of instructor.

Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)

Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2020, Fall 2018, Spring 2014

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 3333 - Twentieth Century Russian Poetry (3 Credits)

The early twentieth century - the three decades preceding and following the Russian Revolution - was a great period of Russian poetry. The focus of this course is short lyrics by early twentieth century Russian poets: Blok, Annenskii, Akhmatova, Mandel'shtam, Pasternak, Tsvetaeva, and others. In this course you'll learn how to read short poems carefully, you'll expand and deepen your understanding of the Russian language, and you'll gain insight into one of the world's major literary traditions. Reading is in Russian (poems) and English (essays and critical works), discussion in English. The course work will be adjusted to the language proficiency of the class. Satisfies the Russian minor requirement for Russian literature with reading in the original.

Prerequisites: proficiency in Russian or permission of instructor.

Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)

Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023, Fall 2021, Fall 2014, Spring 2012

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 3341 - Short Russian Fiction: 19th Century (3 Credits)

The nineteenth-century Russian novel had its beginnings in a period of short fiction; it ended in another one. When Tolstoy was preparing to write Anna Karenina, he reread Pushkin's tales. Dostoevsky's characters have roots in Lermontov's fiction. The Russian novelists also wrote short works. This course focuses on the stories and tales of Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and others. It covers the nineteenth century and extends a decade or two in either direction, to the early years of modern Russian fiction in the late eighteenth century and to the final pre-revolutionary years in the early twentieth century.

Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Spring 2019, Spring 2018

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 3351 - Pushkin's Fictions (3 Credits)

Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837) is among the greatest of Russian writers and a central figure in Russian culture. In a short life - he was killed in a duel at 37 - he wrote in a wide variety of forms. He is best known as a poet, but his fiction marks the beginning of the Russian novel; to understand Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, we need to read Pushkin. Among the fictions we will read are stories, including the Tales of Belkin and The Queen of Spades, the short novel The Captain's Daughter, the novel in verse Eugene Onegin, and the historical novel about the author's African ancestor, The Moor of Peter the Great. We will also read selected short poems.

Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2024, Spring 2021

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 3389 - The Revolutionary as Author: Autobiography and Political Myth (3 Credits)

Crosslisted with COML 3389, ENGL 3989

In this course, we will read some of the most influential examples of a genre at the intersection of literature and history: the memoir of the revolutionary. Along the way, we will consider some of the fictional works (e.g. by Turgenev, Dostoevsky) that have been important in this nonfictional tradition, as well as poetry produced by the revolutionary currents we discuss. As we study the autobiographies of Russian, American, and German leftist political figures like Piotr Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Ernst Toller, and Angela Davis, we will consider the literary methods these writers use to intertwine their own life stories with political history. How is life-writing a form of revolutionary self-fashioning? How have literary movements intersected with revolutionary writings? With special attention to the questions of gender, ethnicity, and race.

Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Spring 2024

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 3435 - Art, Nature, and Empire in Russian and Soviet Culture (3 Credits)

Crosslisted with COML 3435, HIST 3415

How does the state draw political power from nature? What is the relationship between the environment and national and/or imperial identity? How does the environment resist political control, or support human resistance? This course will explore these questions from the perspective of Russian and Soviet culture. Analyzing literature, art, and film in historical context, we will consider the environment as worker and victim, refuge and rebel, commodity and national(ist) emblem, exploring the degrees of agency it is granted in different artistic depictions. With special attention to the history of Russian imperialism and Soviet "internal colonization" and to non-Russian writers and artists of the Russian Empire and USSR, including Indigenous writers. All readings will be in English.

Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 4172 - Tolstoy: History and Counter-Culture (4 Credits)

Crosslisted with HIST 4172, SHUM 4172

Tolstoy is impossible. An aristocrat who renounced the privileges of wealth and rank. A man of titanic appetites who repudiated meat, alcohol and sex. A Christian who did not believe in God and tried to rewrite the Gospels. An anarchist who ruled his estate like an ancient patriarch. A writer of genius who thought literature was evil and a waste of time and referred to his greatest novel as garbage. A pacifist who described the frontline experience of soldiers in the most careful, loving detail. In Tolstoy's imaginative universe, we may find the origin of contemporary conflicts and anxieties about money, about love and about power. But Tolstoy's modern consciousness was not made in Paris or New York - Tolstoy was made in late imperial Russia, notoriously the least modern country in nineteenth century Europe. How, then, did Tolstoy happen? How can we account historically for the contradictions that informed his epic project of self-fashioning? In this seminar, we will see Tolstoy at work in his single-handed creation of a counter-culture at war with the social and political currents of his time - and of ours.

Distribution Requirements: (HA-AG, KCM-AG), (HST-AS)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2024, Fall 2019

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 4492 - Supervised Reading in Russian Literature (1-4 Credits)

Independent reading course in topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses. Students select a topic in consultation with the faculty member who has agreed to supervise the course work.

Exploratory Studies: (CU-UG); (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Summer 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024

Schedule of Classes

RUSSL 6611 - Supervised Reading and Research (2-4 Credits)

Independent study.

Prerequisites: proficiency in Russian or permission of instructor.

Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2024

Schedule of Classes