

# RUSSIAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES

## Overview and Contact Information

From Pushkin to Putin, from Balanchine to Lake Baikal, from caviar to commissars, from yurts to baba yaga—Russia and Eurasia offer a glittering array of riches waiting to be discovered. Mount Holyoke's Department of Russian and Eurasian Studies invites you to join with us in our exploration of the vast area of the world that we engage in on a daily basis. Through course work in language, literature, history and politics, our students gain a multidimensional understanding of the diverse peoples and cultures that inhabit this region—its past, its present, as well as its prospects for the future.

As the world reconfigures itself at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a reenergized Russia will play a major role in shaping the political and economic futures of Europe and Asia, and resolving issues of global importance like resource use, climate change, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation. Indeed, Mount Holyoke graduates who have focused on Russian studies can be found working in nongovernmental organizations in Washington D.C., embassies in Russia and Europe, the oil fields of Siberia, as well as in journalism and business.

Beyond the purely pragmatic, Russia's fundamental cultural achievements—in literature, art, music, theatre, and film—are of permanent value and interest to students of the humanities. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Akhmatova and Pasternak, Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich, Vertov and Eisenstein, Pavlova and Baryshnikov, Gergiev and Rostropovich—the Russian legacy of achievement is profound, and continues to be a living presence in the intellectual, spiritual, and creative life of humanity. Our commitment to this legacy is at once intensely intellectual and deeply personal: until his death in 1996, Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Brodsky was counted among our colleagues.

The Department of Russian and Eurasian Studies is unique among MHC's language departments in that its faculty includes both specialists in language, literature, and culture and specialists in history and politics. Various trained in Russia, Europe, and the United States, we strive to bring a balance and a perspective to our subject area that is challenging, engaging, thoughtful—and never dull.

For students with a strong interest in the non-Russian nations of Eurasia, a working knowledge of Russian and a grasp of Russia's historical role on the Eurasian continent are essential to understanding the peoples and places that have lived or continue to live under Russian influence (the Caucasus, Central Asia, Siberia). The Mount Holyoke Department of Russian and Eurasian Studies stands out among Russian departments in the Five Colleges in that it includes a specialist who is uniquely qualified to interpret events in Eurasia beyond the borders of Russia itself (Jones). Our students study not only in European Russia, but in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Siberia, and experience the multicultural expanse of Eurasia.

Beyond regular course work, the department sponsors spring and fall festivals of Russian food, a film series, lectures, and other events (like building a Mongolian yurt).

## Study Abroad

Study abroad is highly recommended and may be used toward fulfillment of major requirements.

There are numerous summer, semester, and yearlong programs offered for undergraduates. Since admission to many Russian study abroad programs is competitive, students are advised to consult early in their academic careers with members of the department. We have had great success in getting our students into these competitive programs.

Opportunities to study the non-Russian languages of Eurasia are rapidly expanding. Summer immersion programs and summer and academic-year programs abroad offer instruction in Armenian, Georgian, Azeri, Uzbek, Tajik, Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Estonian, and others. In some cases, applicants may be expected to have an intermediate-level command of Russian.

Every January, the department sends students to Georgia (the country) for a three week January term where both Georgian and Russian are spoken.

## See Also

- Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/russian-east-european-eurasian-studies>)

## Contact Information

**Stephen Jones, Chair**

**Dominique Rampton, Academic Department Coordinator**

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413-538-2648  
<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/russian>

## Faculty

**This area of study is administered by the Department of Russian and Eurasian Studies:**

Stephen Jones, Professor of Russian Studies

Peter Scotto, Professor of Russian

Irina Kogel, Five College Lecturer of Russian

Susanna Nazarova, Five College Lecturer in Russian

## The Majors

The Department of Russian and Eurasian Studies offers two majors:

- Russian Literature and Culture
- Russian and Eurasian Studies

These are distinct but connected majors. In both majors, students will learn about the interconnections between language, literature, politics, and history.

The major in Russian literature and culture explores Russia's rich cultural heritage and its unique contributions to world culture, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Departmental offerings concentrate on Russia's achievements in culture and literature, but students are encouraged to take elective courses in Russian film, religion, and art at Mount Holyoke and the Five Colleges.

The interdisciplinary major in Russian and Eurasian studies explores the historical, economic, political, and cultural interconnections among the peoples of the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. It prepares students for careers in international affairs and global development, including the foreign service, media work, education, energy issues, and the environment. We offer internships and study abroad programs that provide the practical experience that employers value. In addition to offerings within the department, courses that count toward the major are regularly offered by other departments (economics, geography, history, politics, and international relations), in addition to courses in the Five Colleges. Students are urged to take advantage of these opportunities.

Both majors place emphasis on the analysis of texts, on effective oral and written argumentation, and on cooperative learning and independent work. Students who wish to focus their study on the non-Russian areas of northern Eurasia (Ukraine, Caucasus, Central Asia, the Baltics, the non-Russian peoples of Siberia) are invited to design a special major in consultation with the department. Early consultation is strongly advised.

## Requirements for the Major in Russian Literature and Culture

A minimum of 36 credits:

Three courses in Russian beyond RES-201, normally RES-202 and advanced Russian language courses in the Five Colleges	12
One of the following:	4
RES-240 Contemporary Russian Politics: From Lenin to Putin	
RES-241 Russia, the West, and the Challenge of Putinism	
RES-210 Great Books: The Literature of Nineteenth-Century Russia	4
RES-211 Topics in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature	4
Three 300-level courses, one each from literature, culture, and politics/history	12
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>36</b>

### Additional Specifications

- When a student has completed two courses at the 200 level, she may, with the permission of the instructor and in consultation with her advisor, enroll in a 200-level course for 300-level credit.

## Requirements for the Major in Russian and Eurasian Studies

A minimum of 40 credits:

Proficiency in Russian language demonstrated by completion of the following:	4
RES-202 Intermediate Russian (or equivalent)	
A one-semester survey of Russian history, to be chosen in consultation with the advisor	4
RES-210 Great Books: The Literature of Nineteenth-Century Russia	4
RES-240 Contemporary Russian Politics: From Lenin to Putin	4
RES-241 Russia, the West, and the Challenge of Putinism	4
12 credits at the 300 level, divided among three or more disciplines	12

8 additional credits in Russian and Eurasian studies	8
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>40</b>

### Additional Specifications

- When a student has completed two courses at the 200 level, she may, with the permission of the instructor and in consultation with her advisor, enroll in a 200-level course for 300-level credit.
- The major in Russian and Eurasian Studies is interdisciplinary. Students who complete this major automatically fulfill the College's "outside the major" requirement.

## Requirements for the Minor in Language

A minimum of 12 credits above the 100 level, ordinarily drawn from the following:

RES-201 Intermediate Russian	4
RES-202 Intermediate Russian	4
RES-251 Advanced Russian	4
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>12</b>

## Requirements for the Minor in Culture and Literature

A minimum of 20 credits, which ordinarily include:

A one-semester course in Russian history	4
RES-210 Great Books: The Literature of Nineteenth-Century Russia	4
RES-211 Topics in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature	4
Two additional courses to be chosen in consultation with the Russian department, including one at the 300 level	8
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>20</b>

### Additional Specifications

- The minor in culture and literature is designed for students who have an interest in Russian literature and culture, but have not studied the language. It requires 20 credits and is not recommended for anyone who wishes to focus on Russia at the graduate level.

## Requirements for the Minor in Russian and Eurasian Studies

A minimum of 12 credits, which ordinarily include:

RES-201 Intermediate Russian (or its equivalent)	4
Two courses in Russian studies, including one course at the 300 level	8
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>12</b>

### Additional Specifications

- The minor in Russian and Eurasian studies is designed to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the former Soviet Union and its peoples and cultures and to develop intermediate-level proficiency in the Russian language.

## Teacher Licensure

Students interested in pursuing licensure in the field of Russian and Eurasian studies can combine their course work in Russian and Eurasian studies with a minor in education. In some instances course work in the major coincides with course work required for licensure; in other cases, it

does not. For specific course requirements for licensure within the major of Russian and Eurasian studies, please consult your advisor or the chair of the Russian and Eurasian studies department. Further information about the minor in education (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/psychology-education/#minortext>) and the Teacher Licensure program (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/psychology-education/#teacherlicensuretext>) is available in other sections of the catalog, or consult Ms. Lawrence in the psychology and education department.

Licensure also requires a formal application as well as passing scores on the Massachusetts Test of Educator Licensure (MTEL) in both the literacy component and the subject matter component. Copies of the test objectives for the MTEL are available in the Russian and Eurasian studies department and in the Department of Psychology and Education.

Additional information about the Licensure Program, including application materials, can be found on the Teacher Licensure Program website (<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/teach>).

## Course Advice

### Getting Started in Russian

A student coming to Mount Holyoke with no background in Russian language should enroll in RES-101-RES-102, a yearlong introduction to Russian language and culture.

Students who have previously studied Russian and plan to elect Russian language should consult with the department for individual placement.

In addition to the RES-101 and RES-102 sequence, recommended courses for first-year study include:

RES-210	Great Books: The Literature of Nineteenth-Century Russia (Humanities I)	4
RES-211	Topics in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature (Humanities I)	4
RES-240	Contemporary Russian Politics: From Lenin to Putin (Social Sciences III)	4
RES-241	Russia, the West, and the Challenge of Putinism (Social Sciences III)	4

As listed, courses on Russian history or literature and culture may be used to satisfy the Humanities distribution requirement, while courses on Russian and Eurasian Politics satisfy the Social Science distribution requirement.

## Course Offerings

### Taught in Russian

#### RES-101 Elementary Russian

*Fall. Credits: 4*

The four-skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) introduction to the Russian Language with the focus on communicative skills development. Major structural topics include pronunciation and intonation, all six cases, basic conjugation patterns, and verbal aspect. By the end of the course the students will be able to initiate and sustain conversation on basic topics, write short compositions, read short authentic texts and comprehend their meaning, develop an understanding of the Russian culture through watching films and listening to songs.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language*

*Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive*

*S. Nazarova*

*Coreq: RES-101L.*

#### RES-102 Elementary Russian

*Spring. Credits: 4*

Continuation of Russian 101. A four-skills course, with increasing emphasis on reading and writing, that completes the study of basic grammar. Major topics include: predicting conjugation patterns, un-prefixed and prefixed verbs of motion, complex sentences, time expressions, and strategies of vocabulary building. Students watch Russian films, read and discuss authentic texts.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language*

*Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive*

*I. Kogel*

*Prereq: RES-101. Coreq: RES-102L.*

#### RES-201 Intermediate Russian

*Fall. Credits: 4*

In-depth review of grammar topics and expansion of vocabulary with the goal of developing communicative proficiency. Readings include short stories, poetry, and newspaper articles. Students watch Russian films and discuss them orally and in writing. Classes are conducted mostly in Russian.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language*

*Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive*

*S. Nazarova*

*Prereq: RES-101.*

#### RES-202 Intermediate Russian

*Spring. Credits: 4*

Emphasis on increasing active command of grammar while focusing on conversational topics. Readings include poetry, short stories, and magazine and newspaper articles. Students watch and discuss Russian films. Classes are conducted mostly in Russian.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language*

*Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive*

*S. Nazarova*

*Prereq: RES-201.*

**RES-251 Advanced Russian***Spring. Credits: 4*

This course aims at expansion of students' vocabulary and improvement of both writing and speaking skills. The course is intended for students who have completed at least four semesters of Russian or the equivalent. Heritage learners of Russian (those who speak the language) will also benefit from the course. With a strong emphasis on integrating vocabulary in context, this course aims to help students advance their lexicon and grammar, increase fluency, and overcome speaking inhibitions. We will read and discuss a variety of texts including short stories, films, and articles.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language**S. Nazarova**Prereq: RES-202.***Taught in English****RES-210 Great Books: The Literature of Nineteenth-Century Russia***Fall. Credits: 4*

In no other culture has literature occupied the central role it enjoyed in nineteenth-century Russia. Political, social, and historical constraints propelled Russian writers into the roles of witness, prophet, and sage. Yet, far from being limited to the vast, dark 'Big Question' novels of legend, Russian literature offers much humor, lyricism, and fantasy. We will focus on the Russian novel as a reaction to western European forms of narrative and consider the recurring pattern of the strong heroine and the weak hero. Authors will include: Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**P. Scotto**Notes: Taught in English***RES-211 Topics in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature****RES-211DZ Topics in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature: 'Doctor Zhivago: A Poet in History'***Spring. Credits: 4*

Combining epic sweep with lyrical intensity, *Doctor Zhivago* is a great writer's look back at a turbulent epoch in his country's history. Set in Russia's revolutionary years, Boris Pasternak's novel is a testament to the survival of life, love, art -- and the possibility of freedom even under the most difficult conditions. This course will situate a close reading of Pasternak's novel within the various contexts (biographical, political, literary) relevant to understanding this major, but sometimes mysterious, work of Russian fiction.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**P. Scotto**Notes: Taught in English***RES-211TW Topics in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature: Found in Translation: Rediscovered Gems of Twentieth Century Russian Literature'***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

The work of a new generation of talented translators has brought to light hidden treasures of twentieth and twenty-first century Russian literature. From the memoirs of a Russian woman fleeing the chaos of the 1917 Revolution (Teffi), to a slapstick hunt for czarist diamonds hidden in the stuffing of a chair a chair (Ilf and Petrov), to a writer caught in the infinitely expanding space of his apartment (Krizhanovsky) to the tales told by beautiful young werefox, this course will sample some of those discoveries. Something for everyone and fun for all!

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**P. Scotto**Notes: Taught in English***RES-231 Anna Karenina and Contexts****RES-231FA Anna Karenina and Contexts: 'Tolstoy on Love, Death, and Family Life'***Spring. Credits: 4*

*Anna Karenina* (1873) is one of a series of important works Tolstoy wrote pondering love, death, the nature of happiness, and the foundations of family life. Our reading of *Anna Karenina* will be the centerpiece of this course which will also include works ranging from *Childhood* (1852) to *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889), which shocked and repelled readers with its unsparing depictions of human sexuality and murderous jealousy. Film versions of works will be screened.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**P. Scotto**Notes: Taught in English***RES-240 Contemporary Russian Politics: From Lenin to Putin***Fall. Credits: 4*

Russia was transformed by communist revolution into a global superpower that challenged the dominant ideologies of liberalism and nationalism. It became a powerful alternative to capitalism. In 1991, this imperial state collapsed and underwent an economic, political, and cultural revolution. What explains the Soviet Union's success for 70 years and its demise in 1991? What sort of country is Russia as it enters the twenty-first century? Is it a democracy? How has Russia's transformation affected ordinary people and Russia's relationship to the West?

*Crosslisted as: POLIT-209**Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences**S. Jones**Notes: Taught in English***RES-241 Russia, the West, and the Challenge of Putinism***Spring. Credits: 4*

Since its creation at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Soviet Union dominated the minds of Western foreign policymakers. None of the West's policies in the Middle East, the Third World, Europe, or China after World War II can be understood without the study of Soviet foreign policy. We will examine the development of Soviet foreign policy since 1917 and, following the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the role played by Russia and Russia and the former Soviet republics in the far more complex and multipolar 'New World Order.' What should U.S. policy be toward the emerging new states of the Baltics, Central Asia, and Caucasia?

*Crosslisted as: POLIT-264**Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences**S. Jones**Notes: Taught in English***RES-330 Nationalism, Populism, and the New World Order***Spring. Credits: 4*

Nationalism is one of the greatest challenges to multiethnic states. They have had to create new strategies to deal with the demands of ethnic minorities. Taking the four states of Spain, Canada, Russia, and the former Yugoslavia as examples, we will focus on nationalist movements within these states and the central governments' responses. What has been the effect of the Communist legacy? Are there alternatives to federalism as a way of managing national claims? What socioeconomic policies have governments used to control ethnic tensions? What role can international organizations play in finding solutions to ethnic conflict?

*Crosslisted as: POLIT-308**Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences**S. Jones**Prereq: 8 credits in politics, international relations, or Russian and Eurasian studies.*

## **Independent Study**

### **RES-295 Independent Study**

*Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 4*

*The department*

*Instructor permission required.*

### **RES-395 Independent Study**

*Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 8*

*The department*

*Instructor permission required.*