

TWO SCENARIOS FOR RUSSIAN AT MAC: STATUS QUO vs RUSSIAN STUDIES

WHAT DO WE GET BY KEEPING RUSSIAN AS A DISCIPLINARY DEPARTMENT?

This is the configuration preferred by the Russian department.

Russian will remain at a status quo as part of a joint department with German Studies, the Russian part to remain staffed at 2 tenure-track + 1 term faculty to a total of 3 FTEs.

Russian has been (arbitrarily) combined with German for over 20 years and this combination of two distinct disciplines has worked because our faculty has been unusually well-matched and we have been allowed a Chair + Co-chair arrangement with a person in charge of the specific aspects of each unit (curriculum, hiring, library budget, Language House, Native speakers, study abroad, professional societies, conferences, etc.) and the (rotating) Chair in charge of common aspects, such as the program budget, staffing, office space, the (single shared) department coordinator, etc. The Chair is given 1 course release /year and the Co-Chair is given 1 course release / three years. Despite occasional requests for separation, we have prevailed as a duo with two equal partners and propose to continue this friendly arrangement.

- We can continue offering upper level (3rd and 4th year) courses in Russian language which means useable proficiency in a variety of careers, as shown by alumni. The upper level language classes have a rich cultural content.
- A rich array of courses in Russian literature and culture, both the canon and noncanonical texts, courses on both literature and other aspects of culture; the full chronological spectrum of Russian literature and culture
- With 3 FTEs we can offer the full spectrum of courses we currently offer—juggling the frequency of offerings, as we do now
- The possibility to offer first-year seminars and courses relevant outside the department, especially to International Studies, HCST, and WGST; to complement offerings in other departments with relevance to the area.

WHAT DO WE GET BY CREATING A RUSSIAN STUDIES INTERDISCIPLINARY DEPARTMENT?

An interdisciplinary Russian Studies department is our alternative proposal to EPAG, merging our current Russian department with RCEES and "divorcing" from German Studies. This would entail 2 FTEs in Russian language/literature/culture (retaining our current two tenure-track positions and relinquishing our 3-year term position) working closely with RCEES colleagues in History, Economics, IS, and potentially Music and Geography. This would be a freestanding unit with a Chair (most likely from Russian; possibly a Steering Committee), a common introductory course and a common Senior Seminar.

We would save the college:

- 1 FTE by giving up one full-time non-tenure track position.
- Gary Krueger's RCEES/ACTC coordinator position and the marginal salary attached to that

- Possibly some modest part of the combined Russian part of the German Studies and Russian plus the RCEES budgets.

Curriculum

9 courses (4 language + 5 literature/culture courses, most in English) (2 x 5 – 1 Chair's release course)

regular offerings of a good selection of our current RCEES courses

a new Intro to Russian Studies

a new/redesigned Senior Seminar in Russian Studies

Major (finer details to be worked out later)

Russian language, 24 credits: four semesters of language instruction (cutting three semesters worth from our current requirement), with a third year of language to be fulfilled through the required semester abroad

Russian literature and culture, 12 credits: a progression from survey courses (taught as at present in English: Russian Culture, 19th-century Russian literature, 20th-century Russian literature) to special courses (Russian Cinema, Gogol and Dostoevsky, *War and Peace*, Russian Popular Culture, Translation as Inter-cultural Communication, Orientalism and Empire; Russia's Literary South--or similar courses, depending on the faculty composition and expertise) to a Senior Seminar.

RCEES courses with 50% or more material relevant to the area of Russia,

Central/Eastern Europe former Soviet Union: 12 credits. *History courses:* 2 survey courses on Russian History, History and Philosophy of Socialism, and possibly a new course on Russia as an empire; *Economics courses:* Comparative Economic Systems, Economics of Transition, Adam Smith and Karl Marx; *IS courses on Central/Eastern Europe:* Ethnicity and Nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe; Writers and Power: the European East in the Twentieth Century; *Geography courses:* a potential continuation of the popular courses on the post-Soviet Middle East Rowe has been offering; potential *Music courses* by Mazullo.

Plusses:

- Macalester would keep Russian as part of its liberal arts curriculum, albeit at a reduced rate.
- We capitalize on the strong presence the RCEES area already has in the composition of Macalester's faculty and curriculum and combines our current offerings into a more concentrated and single location, thus streamlining the current division into Russian and RCEES and IS.
- Curricular breadth while retaining area focus
- Recognition that German Studies and Russian Studies are two distinct disciplines.
- We maintain a language-based Russian program in Macalester's curriculum—which any self-respecting Russian Studies has.

Minuses:

- With a scaled-down language sequence (from 3 1/2 years to 2 years) our majors would graduate with less than usable proficiency in Russian, according to all figures given both by ACTFL, MLA, and the State Department. This would be a significant loss.
- With 2 rather than 3 FTEs in Russian language/literature/culture we would be able to offer only a narrower selection of literature/culture courses. IS would lose one of its languages (they require 3 years).
- We'd be able to contribute less to interdisciplinarity. When reducing our offerings we'd have to delete our most specialized courses such as "Translation as Cross-Cultural Communication" or "Revolution and Culture" or topics courses like "Dandyism" or "Nabokov," and focus on essentials—this would be likely to lessen the connection between teaching and faculty research and lessen our interdisciplinary reach beyond RCEES, e.g. with IS and WGST. At best these courses could be offered significantly less frequently.
- We'd be hard pressed to offer first-year seminars on a regular basis
- Rotating chairing, doing research in Russia (essential to our field), and maintaining a critical mass of faculty on campus could pose problems, with two positions in Russian, rather than three. Faculty from other departments could perhaps chair, but would not have the expertise to supervise the language part of the curriculum
- Hiring Native Speakers from Russia and running a Russian House, essential to Macalester language teaching would be more of a problem than in the disciplinary scenario.
- It would be trickier to accommodate our strongest students who enter with a high school background in Russian language.