

Russian Assessment Plan 2014

I. Department Student Learning Statement

The Russian Studies program offers students an opportunity to learn one of the world's most widely spoken languages, and to access and understand Russia, Eastern and Central Europe, and Central Asia through coursework in language, literature, culture, history, and area studies. Russia and the other members of the former Soviet Union are resurgent economic, political, and military powers with an influence felt around the world. They have a remarkable history and a culture that is as rich in experimentation and innovation as it is in tradition. The twentieth century brought not only revolution and turmoil, but also dazzling experimentation with form, content, and new ways of thinking. Yet a closer look at Russia's history reveals centuries of such innovation, which continues to the present day. This region has produced some of the world's most enduring and beautiful works of music, literature, art, and cinema. Our program provides pathways into discovering this region, its people, and its works. Many of the authors we teach—such as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, and Nabokov—produced classics of world literature that have broadened the definition of their genres. The readings are in translation in the majority of our courses, and all students are welcome. Many of our courses are cross-listed with other departments including American Studies, English, History, International Studies, Political Science, Psychology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

The Russian Studies major allows students to become proficient in spoken and written Russian, to immerse themselves in Russian literature and culture, and to develop a comprehensive understanding of historical and political contexts. The major is flexible to accommodate the complexity of the subject and our students' diverse interests. Students can weight their major toward social sciences or the humanities, combining courses in literature and culture with courses in such fields as history, geography, political science and economics in a way that works best for them.

Our majors graduate with practical skills (e.g., writing, public speaking, research) and valuable critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills. Students typically major in Russian in preparation for careers in law, journalism, business, foreign service, marketing, public health, scientific research, ecology, translation, teaching, and graduate work in the humanities or social sciences. Russia and the other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States are dynamic and complex nations with rapidly growing economies, and as this region continues to develop, it offers ever greater career opportunities for graduates with a knowledge of Russian.

II. Department Learning Goals and Outcomes

A. Learning Goals

- Language Proficiency - Reading
- Language Proficiency - Speaking
- Language Proficiency – Listening/Viewing
- Language Proficiency – Writing

- Language-based Cultural Knowledge
- Knowledge of Literature and Culture
- Knowledge of the Russian, East European and Eurasian Area

B. Learning Outcomes

1. Language Proficiency - Reading: by graduation, our majors should understand the plot, cultural setting, and character portrayals in short texts of Russian fiction and get the gist of newspaper articles and internet sites that are relatively free of jargon.
2. Language Proficiency - Speaking: after two years of Russian language instruction, students should be able to tell about their own lives, get information about other people, describe an event or a person, or summarize a social issue or a story.
3. Language Proficiency – Listening/Viewing: follow instructions in Russian in class, understand answers to questions, and have the basic skill for understanding tour guides and other “sympathetic” native speakers.
4. Language Proficiency - Writing: write short essays that give physical descriptions, summarize events, explain attitudes and cause and effect.
5. Language-based Cultural Knowledge: understand verbal etiquette; know when to address a person informally or formally, how to begin and end a telephone conversation or a letter, how to make polite requests or respond to them, how intonation and gesture affects the meaning of an utterance.
6. Knowledge of Literature and Culture: understand the major issues and assumptions underlying topics such as national identity, place of culture in social order, role of literature and other arts in shaping national identity and state and social order; understand broad theoretical approaches to culture, including some critical theory.
7. Knowledge of the Russian, East European and Eurasian Area: explore aspects of Russian Studies beyond language, literature, and culture, such as economics, history, music, nationalism/post-nationalism in politics and society.

III. Department Assessment Strategies

1. Language Proficiency - Reading
 - Re-vamp the Senior Seminar syllabus to include short works of literature and journalism
 - Design a rubric to evaluate the group reading ability of our senior seminar participants
 - Progress on the Second Language Proficiency Plan will help shape this process
2. Language Proficiency - Speaking
 - Create a unit for the second semester of Intermediate Russian - perhaps as oral final exam.
 - Design a rubric to evaluate the group speaking ability of our second-year students
 - Progress on the Second Language Proficiency Plan will help shape this process
3. Language Proficiency – Listening/Viewing

- Create a unit for first semester 3rd Year Russian Language, which will be taught by our native speaker, and will prepare our students for study abroad
 - Design a rubric to evaluate the group communicative ability of our third year students
4. Language Proficiency – Writing
 - Senior seminar students will write a series of short essays that give physical descriptions, summarize events, explain attitudes and cause and effect.
 - Senior seminar instructor evaluate by a rubric to be designed
 5. Language-based Cultural Knowledge
 - Create a unit for first semester 3rd Year Russian Language, which will be taught by our native speaker, and will prepare our students for study abroad
 - Have question inserted into Study Abroad Assessment Instrument for study abroad returnees to self-assess these skill
 6. Knowledge of Literature and Culture
 - Self-survey second-semester senior majors
 - Exit interview during senior dinner. Document by prose summary.
 7. Knowledge of the Russian, East European and Eurasian Area
 - Read papers in an area studies classes. Have students from area studies classes taken outside the department select a writing sample to share with faculty paper on Moodle; exit interview during dinner with seniors.

IV. Four-Year Timeline to Implement Assessment Strategies

For 2014, we will implement outcome 3, which is the most important preparation for the study abroad experience. This will require the creation of a unit for first semester of 3rd Year Russian Language, which we will be creating this semester and over the summer. Our other task for calendar year 2014 will be to develop rubrics for tasks 1-4. We will do this after the campus-wide Second Language Proficiency Plan has been developed, and in consultation with any rubrics developed by other language & culture departments. For calendar year 2015, we will develop the units for second- and third-year Russian described in outcomes 2 & 4. We will need rubrics for these units as well, but we assume that the work we did during year 2014 will have laid the groundwork here. At the end of this year, we will have a clear idea of the language preparation our students have received before they study abroad. Our work in year 2016 will focus on the upper-levels of the major, assessing our students ability to perform independent inquiries and research in Russian (Outcome 1), and to function within Russian-language societies using the norms of those societies (Outcome 5). These outcomes will depend on the creation of the new Third-Year Russian Language class, which will by then be in its third year of existence, and a redesign of the senior seminar syllabus, which we have already planned to do. During calendar year 2017, we will focus on the area studies component of the major. We will evaluate our students' knowledge with the help of our area studies colleagues in other departments, and will gain additional information from our seniors' self-evaluation during an exit interview.