SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

Arnold Hall, 304 Elm Street, 203.432.1300, slavic.department@yale.edu
http://slavic.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
John MacKay

Director of Graduate Studies
Katerina Clark

Professors Edyta Bojanowska, Katerina Clark, Harvey Goldblatt, John MacKay

Associate Professor Molly Brunson

Assistant Professor Marijeta Bozovic

Senior Lectors II Irina Dolgova, Constantine Muravnik

Senior Lectors I Krystyna Illakowicz, Julia Titus, Karen von Kunes

FIELDS OF STUDY
The department offers the Ph.D. in Russian literature and culture and, by special arrangement, in medieval Slavic literature and philology.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
An advanced-level command of the Russian language is required. A ten- to twenty-page writing sample, written in English, should be submitted with the application. The General Test of the GRE is also required.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE
All graduate students are required to take four courses. RUSS 607, Topics in Russian Literature from Its Origins to the Eighteenth Century, is coordinated with the department’s graduate reading list of required works in Russian literature of the period. All students will take an examination in RUSS 607 that will also double as the medieval Russian literature examination for the doctorate (for more on examinations, see below). RUSS 608, Eighteenth-Century Russian Literature, follows the same pattern as RUSS 607. Its readings are also coordinated with the department’s graduate reading list of required works in Russian literature. All students will take an examination in RUSS 608 that will also double as the eighteenth-century Russian literature examination for the doctorate. The other required courses are SLAV 754, Church Slavonic, and RUSS 834, Aspects of Russian Grammar and Teaching Methodology, which combines pedagogy with the structure of Russian. If possible, SLAV 754 should be taken before RUSS 607. RUSS 834 should be taken concurrently with or before a graduate student’s first term of teaching Russian language, typically during the seventh term of study.

The minimum number of graduate courses for the Ph.D. is sixteen, counting the above four required courses. Of the remaining twelve, at least two must be taken in nineteenth-century Russian literature and at least two in twentieth-century Russian literature, including poetry and prose or dramatic works.

Students who have done graduate work elsewhere may petition the department for up to three course credits toward their degree after one year’s residence at Yale.

A special curriculum may be arranged for students wishing to specialize in medieval Slavic literature and philology.

Minor field As part of their program of study, students will also be responsible for developing a minor field of specialization in one of the following: (1) a Western or non-Western literature; (2) film studies; (3) a topic in intellectual history; (4) one of the other arts; (5) another Slavic literature; (6) Slavic linguistics; (7) another discipline relevant to their primary interests in Russian literature. The student’s minor field of specialization will be determined in consultation with the director of graduate studies (DGS). The minor field can be developed most readily through reading courses in the Slavic department or by taking graduate courses in another department. Up to two graduate courses in other departments will count toward the sixteen for the doctorate if they are relevant to a student’s program of study. The successful completion of a course or courses in the student’s minor field taken in another department may double as the departmental examination in the minor.

Examinations The Ph.D. qualifying examinations comprise eight parts and will be completed during the third year of study: (1) medieval Russian literature; (2) Russian literature of the eighteenth century; (3) minor field; (4) nineteenth-century Russian prose and drama; (5) nineteenth-century Russian poetry; (6) twentieth-century Russian prose and drama; (7) twentieth-century Russian poetry; (8) pre-prospectus examination.

The first two examinations are taken in conjunction with courses offered during the first two years of course work, RUSS 607 and RUSS 608. Early in the fifth term of study, students will take (3), a forty-minute oral exam in their chosen minor field, administered by the DGS and relevant faculty within and/or outside the department; this examination will be waived if the student has successfully
completed one or two relevant graduate courses in another department. In October of the third year of study (typically during the second week), students will take two written examinations, (4) and (5), of two hours each, the first on Monday of the given week, the second on Friday. Each exam will consist of two or three passages drawn from well-known works of literature that will be identified and that are designated as required on the department’s reading list (which also includes additional works that are recommended but not required). Students will be expected to choose one passage and write an essay in which they analyze the text from as many of the following points of view as possible: versification (if relevant), style, structure, narrative point of view, themes, genre, period, place in the author’s oeuvre and in literary history, comparative context, and critical reception. Two additional written examinations, (6) and (7), which will follow the same format, will be held during one week at the end of the student’s fifth term of study (typically the first week of December), again on Monday and Friday. Each of these four written exams will be compiled and graded by two faculty members with expertise in the given century and genres. After each exam, students will be informed as to how they performed.

After the final written exam, all students will have a one-hour oral pre-prospectus exam on a date to be specified by the department near the beginning of the sixth term (typically, during the first week of February). This examination will explore issues pertaining to the student’s future dissertation prospectus. Normally, preparation for the exam will entail a more focused reading of the departmental reading list. For example, a student who proposes to work on Pasternak would read not only the required and recommended works by Pasternak, but also the required and recommended works by other writers of the twentieth century. Students will also be expected to explore secondary and theoretical sources outside the reading list that are relevant to their chosen topic. Preparation for the examination will be done in consultation with two faculty advisers (see below), and students will be required to prepare in advance a seven- to ten-page text outlining their future dissertation topic, including a discussion of existing scholarship and the way they propose to structure their work. An annotated bibliography of primary and secondary works pertaining to their dissertation topic should also be appended. The pre-prospectus text will be distributed to all departmental faculty one week prior to the exam, and all faculty will attend the exam. The aim of this exam is for the student to take an intermediate step toward developing a dissertation prospectus and also to provide the student with feedback from the faculty about the project.

The departmental reading list is available on the department’s website.

Article in lieu of examination As a possible alternative to one of the four written examinations on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, students may choose to write an article that they will submit for publication to a scholarly journal. The work will be carried out in consultation with a faculty adviser and will focus on a work or works in either poetry or prose (or drama) of the given century. This article will be due on the date that the exam on the given genre is normally scheduled. It is expected that the article will be ambitious in its overview and in its conceptualization of the issue(s) being addressed. The faculty adviser will evaluate the work and will advise the student on publication.

COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM WITH FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures also offers, in conjunction with the Film and Media Studies Program, a combined Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures and Film and Media Studies. For further details, see Film and Media Studies in this bulletin and the department’s website. Applicants to the combined program must indicate on their application that they are applying both to Film and Media Studies and to Slavic Languages and Literatures. All documentation within the application should include this information.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures does not admit students for the terminal M.A. degree, nor does it award an M.A. en route to the Ph.D. degree. If, however, a student admitted for the Ph.D. leaves the program prior to completion of the doctoral degree, the student may be eligible to receive a terminal master’s degree. The student must have completed at least fifteen term courses in Russian literature and linguistics, chosen in consultation with the DGS. A grade of Honors in at least two term courses and an average of High Pass in the remaining courses must be attained. A reading knowledge of French or German is required, and candidates must pass departmental proficiency examinations in Russian.

More information is available on the department’s website, http://slavic.yale.edu.

COURSES

RUSS 608a, Eighteenth-Century Russian Literature Staff
A comprehensive survey of the main trends in eighteenth-century Russian literature. Topics of interest include normative aesthetics; generic imports and generic diversity; the evolution of the Russian literary language; discourses of imperial statehood in literary, visual, and material culture; the status of the writer; literary and political subjectivity. Key figures under consideration include Trediakovsky, Lomonosov, Sumarokov, Novikov, Fonvizin, Derzhavin, Radischev, and Karamzin, among others.

RUSS 628a, Russian Religious Culture in Thought and Practice Harvey Goldblatt
Examination of Russian religious culture through the centuries, from the origins of an Old Rus’ spiritual civilization in the eleventh century to the emergence of post-Soviet literature and art forms in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Representative works in literature and the visual arts, which deal with both elite and popular culture as well as religious and secular modes of discourse, are chosen from both old Russian bookish culture and the new Russian cultural trends that have their origins in the seventeenth century. All works are examined against a broad comparative background to illustrate the variant and invariant in the long history of Russian
RUSS 665b / HSAR 532b, Russian Style: Material Culture and the Decorative Arts in Imperial Russia  Molly Brunson

This seminar examines the historical development of a national style in Russian decorative arts and material culture from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth. Although known for borrowing liberally from western European artistic traditions, Russian imperial culture—from the baroque and neoclassical courts of Elizabeth and Catherine to the exported “native” imaginaries of the Ballets Russes—also sought to distinguish itself in design, scale, manufacture, and style. Structured around a series of case studies, this seminar considers highlights from the history of Russian decorative arts, all while exploring broader questions about the transnational movement of style, the intersection of nationalism and design, the invention of “native” cultures, and the materialities of empire and modernity. Topics include the branding of Catherine the Great; Russia’s natural resources and trade networks; consumer culture in St. Petersburg; the materialism of realism; the Abramtsvevo artists’ colony and the discovery of folk art; "russkii stil'" (Russian Style) at the World’s Fairs; curating ethnographies and archaeologies; and the “relics” of the Romanovs. Organized as an intensive research seminar, this course brings the central conceptual and theoretical concerns of visual and material culture studies (e.g., materiality and thing theory, ornament and the decorative, the socioeconomics of taste) to a historical and object-based consideration of Russian style. Significant use is made of the museum and library collections at Yale and nearby.

RUSS 663b, Introduction to Russian Poetry  Marijeta Bozovic

This seminar presents an introduction and historical overview of the classics of Russian poetry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including works by Pushkin, Lermontov, Tiutchev, Nekrasov, Gippius, Bely, Blok, Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Khlebnikov, Mayakovsky, Tsvetaeva, and Brodsky, as well as several contemporary Russian poets.

RUSS 670a / E&RS 618a, Empire in Russian Culture  Edyta Bojanowska

Interdisciplinary exploration of Russia’s nineteenth-century imperial culture, history, and politics. Focus on how modern Russian culture reflected, shaped, and challenged imperial reality; on how empire figured in negotiations of Russian national identity; and on Russian versions of Orientalism and colonialism. Special emphasis on representations of peripheral regions, relations between ethnic groups, and the role of gender and race in Russia’s imperial imagination. Authors include Pushkin, Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Saltykov-Schedrin, Leskov, Chekhov, and Tolstoy. Materials combine fiction, poetry, travel writing, journalism, and painting, with readings in postcolonial studies, history, political science, and anthropology. Students without a reading knowledge of Russian need permission of the instructor.

RUSS 682a, Russian Avant-Garde Poetry  Marijeta Bozovic

This graduate seminar explores generations of Russian poetic avant-gardes in their cultural, historical, and political contexts. We focus on poetry but draw on visual culture, music, performance, and political actions as we follow our iconoclasts across genres and media, into and outside of the institutions they critique. We read seminal and recent theories of the avant-garde (Frankfurt school; Bürger; Mann; Sell) and poetry and aesthetic productions of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. From the demiurgic ambitions of the historical avant-garde (Khlebnikov, Mayakovsky, Vertinsky) we move to its Soviet continuation and transformation (Kharm, Oberiu); nonconformist Soviet-era practices (Nekrasov, Roald Mandelstam); Conceptualism (Prigov, Rubinstein); and finally post-Soviet and contemporary leftist avant-gardes (Medvedev, Chukhrov). Our readings include the works of Tsvetaeva, recontextualized in an alternative tradition of Russian poetry, as well as poems published this very year. What do such interventions mean today? The artistic avant-garde has always stood as a metaphorical surrogate for political violence; but has the “avant-garde tradition” become a travesty of the ambitions that marked its historical beginnings? Our approach emphasizes language, form, and medium as well as theory, philosophy, and politics. Weekly practices involve close reading, research, theoretical reframing, and ongoing collaborative participation.

RUSS 695b / FILM 778b, Russian Literature and Film in the 1920s and 1930s  Katerina Clark

This course presents a historical overview, incorporating some of the main landmarks of the 1920s and 1930s including works by Pilnyak, Bakhtin, the Formalists, Platonov, Mayakovsky, Bulgakov, Zoshchenko, Eisenstein, Prozantanov, Pudovkin, the Vasilyev “brothers,” and G. Aleksandrov.

RUSS 776a / CPLT 841a, The Danube in Literature and Film  Marijeta Bozovic

The Danube is Europe’s second longest river: it flows through or borders ten countries, while its watershed covers four more. From ancient Rome to the present, the Danube has served both as a connector and a contested terrain: from its beginnings in the German Black Forest to the Romanian and Ukrainian shores of the Black Sea, the Danube flows through a region that has emerged black and blue from imperial aspirations of domination, hostilities in the wake of the Cold War, and civil war. The southeastern portion of the river constitutes Europe’s Other—the “Barbaropa” within the continent’s own geographic boundaries—and faces the expansion of another super-political entity in the European Union. This seminar turns to the physical, historical, and metaphorical uses of the great river. At a time of tenuous unification in Europe, “Danube studies” seek to remap the region by focusing on the river’s peoples and their cultural imaginaries and interactions from antiquity to the present, exposing the Danube as a quintessential site of cross-cultural engagement. We study the region’s geography and history, engage theoretical paradigms for understanding cultural differences and their negotiation, draw on film theory and cultural studies, and examine transnational cinema, artwork, and literary texts from various Danubian cultural traditions. Through a focus on works of creative and imaginative culture—primarily, on literature and film—the course foregrounds the aesthetic mediation of actual and possible communities, in search of utopian promise even amidst and in the wake of historical atrocities.
RUSS 834b, Aspects of Russian Grammar and Teaching Methodology  Irina Dolgova
The course examines various aspects of Russian grammar and the use of different teaching methodologies. Special emphasis is placed on the connection between linguistic knowledge and its application for teaching Russian in an English-speaking classroom. Different types of language learners, diverse teaching strategies, and existing resources for teaching Russian are discussed.

RUSS 851b, Proseminar in Slavic Literature  Molly Brunson
Introduction to the graduate study of Russian literature. Topics include literary theory, methodology, introduction to the profession.