SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

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http://slavic.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
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FIELDS OF STUDY

The graduate program of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures values interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives on Russian, East European, and Eurasian literatures and cultures. While maintaining a foundation in the study and teaching of language and literature, the Department sees both as embedded in a global context and a broad network of cultural production. Students are encouraged to develop their primary fields of study as well as meaningful connections with other disciplines, including comparative literature, history of art, film and media studies, history and the social sciences, gender and sexuality studies, and the digital humanities.

The Department’s primary doctoral track is the Ph.D. in Russian literature and culture, with a strong emphasis on transnational and transmedial approaches. The Department also offers a combined degree in Slavic Languages and Literatures and Film and Media Studies (see below). By special arrangement, the Department will consider individualized ad hoc programs with other departments. Students are encouraged to complement their research and teaching interests with one of Yale’s certificate programs, such as Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Film and Media Studies; Translation Studies; Environmental Humanities; or the MacMillan Center’s Councils on African, European, Latin American and Iberian, and Middle East Studies.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

Course Requirements All graduate students are required to take sixteen courses in their first two years of graduate study, which must include RUSS 951, Proseminar: Theory and Methods. In addition to this one mandatory course, students must fulfill the following distributional requirements through graduate-level coursework:
• Minimum of one course on Slavic literature or culture before the eighteenth century
• Minimum of one course on eighteenth-century Slavic literature or culture
• Minimum of two courses on nineteenth-century Slavic literature or culture
• Minimum of two courses on twentieth-century Slavic literature or culture
• Minimum of one course on twenty-first-century Slavic literature or culture
• Minimum of two (but no more than four out of the required sixteen) courses outside the Slavic Department.

Students who have done graduate-level coursework elsewhere may petition for up to three courses taken at another institution to count toward degree requirements, and may use any course slots freed through prior study to take additional elective courses at Yale. Language courses do not count toward the required sixteen courses.

Language Requirements Entering students are expected to have sufficient knowledge of Russian to allow for satisfactory work at the graduate level and are required to pass a departmental proficiency examination in Russian. Students must also demonstrate competence in a second foreign language, as soon as possible or by the beginning of the fifth term of study. Students may choose to pursue proficiency in a second East European or Eurasian language; in a language useful for broader access to scholarship; or in any language relevant for well-motivated comparative work. Competence in a second foreign language may be demonstrated through coursework or a reading examination.

Minor Field Students are responsible for developing a minor field of specialization in one of the following: (1) a second language or literature; (2) visual culture or one of the other arts; (3) a topic in intellectual history or a specific interdisciplinary approach; or (4) another discipline relevant to their primary interests. To demonstrate competency in their chosen minor field, students are required to submit a minor field portfolio no later than September 1st of their third year of graduate study.

Qualifying Paper Students must submit a qualifying paper (7000–9000 words) no later than September 1st of their third year. The paper, which in many cases will be a revised version of a seminar paper, should be developed in consultation with a faculty adviser.

Comprehensive and Qualifying Examinations In early October of their third year, students will take a comprehensive examination on Russian literature and culture from the nineteenth century to the present. The comprehensive is a twelve-hour take-home exam. This exam is meant to test the students’ knowledge of the broad scope of Russian literature and culture, as well as their ability to analyze various kinds of cultural products and position specific works within their historical, cultural, and critical contexts. Students should use the departmental reading list as a guide in preparing for this exam, but they are also welcome to draw from beyond the list in their answers. In early December of their third year, students will also take a qualifying examination based on two specialized reading lists. This exam is a one-hour oral exam with twenty-five minutes allotted to each list, evaluated by two faculty advisers and the Director of Graduate Studies. The exam is meant to test the student’s knowledge of two specific areas of study, which often serve as important preparation for the development of a dissertation topic.
Pre-Psychology and Prospectus Presentation In early February of their third year, students will present a preliminary version of their dissertation prospectus (the pre-prospectus) at a one-hour colloquium attended by all Slavic ladder faculty. At the colloquium, students will present a brief introduction to their prospective dissertation, which will be followed by discussion and feedback. After the pre-prospectus colloquium, students will ask two faculty members to serve on their dissertation committee. These committee members will oversee the revision of the preliminary prospectus into a final draft (approximately 5000 words plus a detailed bibliography). In early April, students will present the final version of their dissertation prospectus to all students and faculty in the department. The prospectus presentation will take one hour, beginning with a brief introduction by the student and followed by discussion.

Dissertation The dissertation committee should include at least three faculty members: a chair (who must be a ladder faculty member from Slavic), one additional ladder faculty member from Slavic, and one faculty member either from Slavic, another department, or outside Yale. Students can petition to add additional committee members. Students must determine the constitution of their committee by October 1 of their fourth year. The dissertation is the culmination of the student’s work in the doctoral program and an important emblem of professional competence, intellectual rigor, and academic potential. As such, it should demonstrate mastery of a defined field of research and should articulate an original and substantive contribution to knowledge. While all dissertations should have clearly defined empirical and theoretical stakes and be grounded in appropriate methodological choices, each project will approach its central questions in necessarily distinct ways: some based more heavily in archival research, others shaped more profoundly by theoretical discussions, and still others determined by entirely different disciplinary or interdisciplinary demands.

First Chapter Talk During the spring semester of the fourth year, students will deliver a forty-five-minute talk on their first chapter to the entire department. Students will revise their chapter after the talk, submitting a final draft to their dissertation committee no later than May 1st.

Teaching All graduate students are expected to teach for a minimum of four semesters, typically in the third and fourth years of study. Teaching is required to receive additional sixth-year funding. Students are usually assigned at least two semesters of language teaching and two semesters of literature/culture teaching.

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 language, 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. Candidates must pass a departmental proficiency examination in Russian, and prove competency in a second foreign language.

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

COURSES

RUSS 603b, Russian Realist Literature and Painting  Molly Brunson
An interdisciplinary examination of the development of nineteenth-century Russian realism in literature and the visual arts. Topics include the Natural School and the formulation of a realist aesthetic; the artistic strategies and polemics of critical realism; narrative, genre, and the rise of the novel; the Wanderers and the articulation of a Russian school of painting; realism, modernism, and the challenges of periodization. Readings include novels, short stories, and critical works by Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Goncharov, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and others. Painters of focus include Fedotov, Perov, Shishkin, Repin, and Kramskoy. Special attention is given to the particular methodological demands of interart analysis.

RUSS 608a, Eighteenth-Century Russian Literature  Jinyi Chu
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, Radishchev, and Karamzin, among others.

RUSS 653b / FILM 643, Second Sex after the Second World  Marijeta Bozovic
This graduate seminar offers a comparative study of literature, art, and critical theory across (post-)state socialist countries, highlighting the region’s intertwining stories of socialist and feminist thought. We combine an examination of international feminist theory’s complex engagements with Second World legacies and detailed studies of political emancipatory aesthetic strategies in Russia and Eastern Europe up to the present. We will review the intertwining histories of socialist and feminist thought—their clashes and collusions; trajectories and politically fraught, ever-changing legacies. How did feminism inform, emerge from, betray and be betrayed by economic and class-based critique? How can we reconsider these legacies, after the long shadow of Cold War? We study the work and the narratives constructed around figures such as Alexandra Kollontai and Rosa Luxemburg; consider translation and dissemination histories; and interrogate international feminist theory’s complicated engagement with state socialist culture in the 1970s and 1980s. How do we read Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva, reading the “East,” from a perspective no longer dichotomized by Cold War intellectual stilos? We end with the return of the radical repressed across artistic, theoretical, and activist socialist feminist strategies in post-socialist Russia and Eastern Europe.
RUSS 681a, Russian Romantic Poetry  Marijeta Bozovic
This seminar explores Russian romantic poetry in cultural and international contexts. We study the philosophical foundations; the preoccupation with various temporalities; the longing for total art bounded by lyric form; aesthetics and politics; and other topics. Readings include the works of Aleksandr Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Fedor Tiutchev, Konstantin Batiushkov, Evgenii Baratynskii, as well as Vasilii Zhukovskii, Nikolai Nekrasov, Afanasy Fet, and others. The approach emphasizes prosody, genre, and medium as well as the dissemination of ideas across media and cultures. Weekly practices involve close reading, research, theoretical reframing, and ongoing collaborative participation and presentations.

RUSS 689b, Russian Symbolist Poetry  Jinyi Chu
This graduate seminar explores Russian Symbolist poetry in cultural and international contexts. We study the philosophical foundations (Nietzsche, Solovyov); the preoccupation with various temporalities (modernity); the longing for total art (Wagner) bounded by lyric form; aestheticism; utopianism; decadence; and other topics. Our readings include the works of Vladimir Solovyov, Valery Bryusov, Konstantin Balmont, Fedor Sologub, Zinaida Gippius, Mikhail Kuzmin, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Andrei Bely, and Aleksandr Blok – as well as of “post-Symbolists” Nikolai Gumilyov, Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam, and Marina Tsvetaeva. Our approach emphasizes prosody, genre, and medium as well as the dissemination of ideas across media and cultures. Weekly practices involve close reading, research, theoretical reframing, and ongoing collaborative participation and presentations.

RUSS 696a / FILM 775a, Post-Stalin Literature and Film  Katerina Clark
The main developments in Russian and Soviet literature and film from Stalin’s death in 1953 to the present.

RUSS 715a / FILM 629a, Documentary, Fiction, Docufiction  John MacKay
A seminar on the relationship between nonfictional and fictional media practice, with a particular focus on the “docufiction” form. Topics to be discussed include debates over the coherence of the notion of “documentary”; the epistemological and political claims of fiction and documentary; and the relationship of documentary and fictional practice to questions of nationhood, ethnicity, and gender. Films by directors such as Vertov, Eisenstein, Shub, Flaherty, Ivens, Visconti, Varda, Makavejev, Trinh Minh-ha, Costa, and Kiarostami.

RUSS 834a, 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.