RUSSIAN (RUSS)

* RUSS 026a / RSEE 009a, Culture and Everyday Life in Central Asia  Claire Roosien
This first-year seminar explores the diverse cultures of Central Asia, including the former Soviet republics (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan), and Xinjiang. Students encounter a range of literature, film, music and performance, material culture, and food culture. Students apply a critical eye to the ways outsiders have represented and misrepresented Central Asia. The course begins with a historical overview of the region through a critical analysis of several popular misconceptions. In three subsequent units, focused on steppe nomadism, urban life, and mobility and migration, students get a small taste of the diversity and dynamism of contemporary Central Asian culture. Students visit the Beinecke Library and the Peabody Museum to encounter a range of Central Asia-related holdings at Yale. In a field trip to Brighton Beach, an on-campus concert, and a cooking demo, students also encounter the cultures of the Central Asian diaspora communities in New York and Connecticut. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. WR, HU

RUSS 110a, First-Year Russian I  Julia Titus
A video-based course designed to develop all four language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. Use of dialogues, games, and role playing. In addition to readings in the textbook, students read original short stories and learn Russian songs and poems. Oral and written examinations. L1 RP 1½ Course cr

RUSS 110b, First-Year Russian II  Julia Titus
Continuation of RUSS 110. After RUSS 110 or equivalent. L2 RP 1½ Course cr

RUSS 122a, Russian for Heritage Learners I  Julia Titus
A comprehensive Russian course for native speakers of Russian or other Slavic languages whose formal education has been in English. Overview of Russian grammar, focusing on the writing system, cases, conjunction, and syntax. Readings from Russian prose, film screenings, discussion, and regular practice in translation and composition. L1, L2

RUSS 125a, Intensive Elementary Russian  Constantine Muravnik
An intensive course that covers in one term the material taught in RUSS 110 and 120. For students of superior linguistic ability. Study of Russian grammar; practice in conversation, reading, and composition. Recommended for prospective majors in Russian and in Russian and East European Studies. L1, L2, RP 2 Course cr

RUSS 130a, Second-Year Russian I  Staff
A course to improve functional competence in all four language skills (speaking, writing, reading, and listening comprehension). Audio activities, for use both in the classroom and independently, are designed to help students improve their listening comprehension skills and pronunciation. Lexical and grammatical materials are thematically based. After RUSS 120 or equivalent. L3 RP 1½ Course cr

RUSS 140b, Second-Year Russian II  Staff
Continuation of RUSS 130. After RUSS 130 or equivalent. L4 RP 1½ Course cr

* RUSS 142b, Russian for Heritage Learners II  Julia Titus
Continuation of RUSS 122. Further development of reading and writing skills. Expansion of vocabulary. After RUSS 122 or equivalent. L3, L4

RUSS 145b, Intensive Intermediate Russian  Constantine Muravnik
A continuation of RUSS 125 that covers in one term the material taught in RUSS 130 and 140. For students of superior linguistic ability. Prerequisite: RUSS 125. L3, L4 RP 2 Course cr

RUSS 150a, Third-Year Russian I  Constantine Muravnik
Intensive practice in conversation and composition accompanied by review and refinement of grammar. Readings from nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, selected readings in Russian history and current events, and videotapes and films are used as the basis of structured conversation, composition, and grammatical exercises. Oral and written examinations. Audiovisual work in the Center for Language Study required. After RUSS 140 or 145 or equivalent. L5 RP 1½ Course cr

RUSS 151b, Third-Year Russian II  Constantine Muravnik
Continuation of RUSS 150. After RUSS 150 or equivalent. L5 RP 1½ Course cr

RUSS 160a, Fourth-Year Russian I  Irina Dolgova
Discussion topics include Russian culture, literature, and self-identity; the old and new capitals of Russia, the cultural impact of the Russian Orthodox Church, and Russia at war. Readings from mass media, textbooks, and classic and modern literature. Use of video materials. After RUSS 151 or equivalent. L5

RUSS 161b, Fourth-Year Russian II  Irina Dolgova
Continuation of RUSS 160. After RUSS 160 or equivalent. L5

* RUSS 172a, Russian History through Literature and Film  Irina Dolgova
Study of important events in Russian history, from the medieval times to the present, through authentic reading materials in various genres and through feature and documentary films. The course is designed to advance students' speaking proficiency in Russian and to develop their reading, listening, and writing skills. Texts include Russian fairy tales; fragments from The Primary Chronicles; A. Tolstoy's
Novels and short stories by a contemporary Russian writer, Victor Pelevin. Focus on Pelevin’s major novel, Chapaev i Pustota, the theory of the grotesque, and on the relationship between imagination and reality. Diverse conceptions of the grotesque; the ethical and aesthetic significance of the conflict between the real and the fantastic; Pelevin’s place in the specifically Russian grotesque tradition of Gogol and Nabokov. Prerequisite: RUSS 142 or 151 or permission of instructor. 

* RUSS 179a, The Grotesque in Victor Pelevin  Constantine Muravnik

In the early 20th century the Russian Empire of the tsars transformed into the Stalinist state. The course traces this transition by exploring brilliant literary creations of writers such as Bely, Bulgakov, Babel, and Platonov. How did the social tumult of this era give birth to Russian modernism and revolutionary culture? Topics include the radical changes in the lives of Russian gentry and peasants, terrorist and revolutionary movements, civil war, Soviet internationalism, Stalinist terror, a transition to socialist economy, and the Russia’s identity between Europe and Asia. Probing into the salient literary responses to devastations and upheavals, students gain an in-depth understanding of 20th-century Russia’s artistic and political ferment. All readings and class discussions in English. WR, RUSS

RUSS 254b / LITR 245b / RSEE 254b, Tolstoy and Dostoeyevsky  Molly Brunson

Close reading of major novels by two of Russia’s greatest authors. Focus on the interrelations of theme, form, and literary-cultural context. Readings and discussion in English. RUSS

* RUSS 305a / FREN 363 / HUMS 358a, Modernist Paris and Moscow  Katerina Clark

This interdisciplinary, comparative course unsettles the notion of Moscow’s marginality and Paris’s centrality from the viewpoint of early 20th century literature, visual art, film, performance, and architecture. The course demonstrates the ways in which Modernist movements in Moscow and Paris were intimately connected and mutually influenced through decades of artistic exchange and competition. Paradigm-shifting artists, writers, and cultural figures like Natalia Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, Paul Robeson, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Le Corbusier, Langston Hughes, Marina Tsvetaeva, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Walter Benjamin are only a few points of contact between these two epicenters of European modernism. Both Moscow and Paris, sometimes at odds and at other times in collaboration, confronted political and aesthetic questions related to imperial conquest and exoticism, revolution and abstraction in art and language, liberations from race and gender, the march of war and technology, new conceptions of the body, urban imaginaries, and life lived as art. In this course, we explore these very topics in modernism through close reading and visual analysis of works by and/or related to Paul Gauguin, Pablo Picasso, Charles Baudelaire, Symbolists, Walter Benjamin, Futurists, Kazimir Malevich, Meyerhold, the Ballets Russes, Josephine Baker, Jane and Paulette Nardal, Constructivists, Alexander Rodchenko, Surrealists, Aimé Césaire, Négritude, Alexandra Kollontai, Sonia Delaunay, and Varvara Stepanova, among others. No knowledge of Russian is required. RUSS

RUSS 312a / HIST 260a / HUMS 255a / LITR 323a / RSEE 312a, Tolstoy’s War and Peace  Staff

The course is a semester-long study of the quintessential big Russian novel, Leo Tolstoy’s War and Peace, about Napoleon’s failed 1812 war against Russia. War and Peace (1865-1869) is a sweeping panorama of nineteenth-century Russian society, a novel of profound philosophical questions, and an unforgettable gallery of artfully drawn characters. Reading the novel closely, we pose the following questions. In what ways is this patriotic war epic also an imperial novel? What myths does it destroy and construct? How does it combine fiction and history? What forces drive history, as it unfolds in the present? What are the limits of individual agency, and how much do emperors and generals control the fates of nations and armies? Finally, a question that is never too broad for Tolstoy: what is a meaningful, well-lived life? We explore these questions while refining our tools of literary analysis and situating the novel in its historical context and in our contemporary world. Secondary materials include Tolstoy’s letters, contemporary reviews, maps, and historical sources, as well as readings in political theory, philosophy, international relations, and literary criticism. All readings and class discussions in English. No prerequisites required. Both WR and non-WR sections are offered. RUSS

* RUSS 314b, Science and Literature in Russia  Jinyi Chu

We often view science and the humanities as incompatible and even hostile fields. But are they actually as distinct as we think they are? Would it be possible to study science through literature and literature through science? What happens when artists think about science and technology in a country and age that reveres empirical knowledge? This course dives deep into these questions, interrogating how different scientific disciplines were represented in and enriched by Russian and Slavic culture. We look at various fields of scientific knowledge, such as medicine, engineering, physics, and chemistry, in connection to great works of literature, asking what role Russian writers played in shaping them and, conversely, in what ways science affected these fictional pieces. Through science and Russian literature of the 19th to the 20th century, we examine the profound impact of artistic production on different modes of knowledge production and circulation, and trace its resonance in our perceptions of the physical world to this day.

* RUSS 338a / FILM 351a, 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 380b / FILM 360b / LITR 301b / RSEE 380b, Putin’s Russia and Protest Culture  Marijeta Bozovic

Survey of Russian literature and culture since the fall of communism. The chaos of the 1990s; the solidification of power in Putin’s Russia; the recent rise of protest culture. Sources include literature, film, and performances by art collectives. Readings and discussion in English; texts available in Russian.  WR, HU