RUSSIAN (RUSS)

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 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 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 160a, Fourth-Year Russian I  Anastasia Selenevna
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 222a / RSEE 244, War Games  Marijeta Bozovic
Dismissed, mocked, feared or loved for decades, video games have become a staple of contemporary media, art, and popular culture, studied alongside traditional print media and film. They eclipse the global yearly revenue of both film and music industries combined, leaving their financial significance undeniable. What remains understudied, however, is the political and cultural significance of the medium. War Games is a seminar dedicated to the intersection of video games and political violence (both real and imaginary) in a global and particularly post-Cold War context. Students learn to recognize patterns of ideological communication in video games while developing close reading skills of literature and digital media alike. We combine the study of video games with broader inquires into the media that circulate through the game mediaverse, including literature, social and news media, and film. Playing games and reading books, we pose the following questions: How do players “perform” war in games, and how might they resist or subvert expected performances? How indeed are we as readers and players affected by the type of media we consume? What is an
adaptation? How do adaptations influence or potentially reshape our relationships with the source material? What themes and ideas are revealed effectively through one medium versus another? Why do certain literary traditions (such as classical Russian literature) provide such fruitful ground for video game adaptation? What are the political implications for the ideologies present in a video game given the globalized position of the medium? Assigned readings include novels, short stories, news media, and internet forums alongside a range of secondary materials, including film and media theory, intellectual and media histories, digital anthropology, reception studies, and interviews. HU

* RUSS 243a / RSEE 243a / SLAV 243a, Race, Identity, and Empire: Soviet Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1920-1970 Nariman Shelekpayev

Children's literature—works written for children, teenagers, and young adults—emerged only in the late nineteenth-century, as childhood itself was newly understood as a special developmental stage in human life. Alphabet primers, picture books, and novels attempted to establish a set of moral and behavioral ethics that structured children's perceptions of norms and values for many years ahead. In this course, we examine the political life of children's literature in the Soviet Union. How did Soviet writers initiate their young readers' perception of the racial, political, gendered Self and Other, particularly as the Soviet Union situated itself as a transcontinental empire? We begin in the 1920s, when the Soviet state revolutionized children's literature internationally by commissioning books and poems from first-class writers, like Vladimir Mayakovsky, Osip Mandelstam, and Daniil Kharms. As we move through the twentieth century, we investigate how children's literature responds to the international developments of the Cold War. How is the Soviet ideology of race elaborated in children's literature? How are children readers invited into the project of empire, and initiated as citizens, in the very act of reading or holding a book? We approach these works as adult interpreters, while also imagining ourselves as children readers. We discuss the multimediality of these texts, the interaction between text and image in illustrated books. Together, we explore the collections of Soviet children's literature at the Beinecke Library and Princeton's Cotsen Library. Guest instructors discuss the animal and the human in children's literature, the relationship between books and toys, and the practice of translating children's literature. This is an LxC course. HU

* RUSS 267a / LITR 205a / RSEE 257a, Memory and Memoir in Russian Culture Jinyi Chu

How do we remember and forget? How does memory transform into narrative? Why do we read and write memoirs and autobiography? What can they tell us about the past? How do we analyze the roles of the narrator, the author, and the protagonist? How should we understand the ideological tensions between official histography and personal reminiscences, especially in 20th-century Russia? This course aims to answer these questions through close readings of a few cultural celebrities’ memoirs and autobiographical writings that are also widely acknowledged as the best representatives of 20th-century Russian prose. Along the way, we read literary texts in dialogue with theories of memory, historiography, and narratology. Students acquire the theoretical apparatus that enables them to analyze the complex ideas, e.g. cultural memory and trauma, historicity and narrativity, and fiction and non-fiction. Students finish the course with an in-depth knowledge of the major themes of 20th-century Russian history, e.g. empire, revolution, war, Stalinism, and exilic.
experience, as well as increased skills in the analysis of literary texts. Students with knowledge of Russian are encouraged to read in the original language. All readings are available in English.

* RUSS 312a / LITR 210a / RSEE 313a / SLAV 313a / THST 314a, Art and Resistance in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine  

This interdisciplinary seminar is devoted to the study of protest art as part of the struggle of society against authoritarianism and totalitarianism. It focuses on the example of the Soviet and post-Soviet transformation of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. The period under discussion begins after the death of Stalin in 1953 and ends with the art of protest against the modern post-Soviet dictatorships of Alexander Lukashenka in Belarus and Vladimir Putin in Russia, the protest art of the Ukrainian Maidan and the anti-war movement of artists against the Russian-Ukrainian war. The course begins by looking at the influence of the “Khrushchev Thaw” on literature and cinema, which opened the way for protest art to a wide Soviet audience. We explore different approaches to protest art in conditions of political unfreedom: "nonconformism," "dissidence," "mimicry," "rebellion." The course investigates the existential conflict of artistic freedom and the political machine of authoritarianism. These themes are explored at different levels through specific examples from the works and biographies of artists. Students immerse themselves in works of different genres: films, songs, performances, plays and literary works.

* RUSS 316a / EALL 288a / LITR 303a, Socialist ’80s: Aesthetics of Reform in China and the Soviet Union  

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to the study of the complex cultural and political paradigms of late socialism from a transnational perspective by focusing on the literature, cinema, and popular culture of the Soviet Union and China in 1980s. How were intellectual and everyday life in the Soviet Union and China distinct from and similar to that of the West of the same era? How do we parse “the cultural logic of late socialism?” What can today’s America learn from it? Examining two major socialist cultures together in a global context, this course queries the ethnographic, ideological, and socio-economic constituents of late socialism. Students analyze cultural materials in the context of Soviet and Chinese history. Along the way, we explore themes of identity, nationalism, globalization, capitalism, and the Cold War. Students with knowledge of Russian and Chinese are encouraged to read in original languages. All readings are available in English.

* RUSS 325a / RSEE 325a / URBN 303a, Ten Eurasian Cities  

This course explores histories and identities of ten cities in Northern and Central Eurasia. Its approach is based on an assumption that studying cities is crucial for an understanding of how societies developed on the territory of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and post-Soviet states. The course is structured around the study of ten cities—Kyiv, Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Odesa, Baku, Magnitogorsk, Kharkiv, Tashkent, Semey (former Semipalatinsk), and Nur-Sultan (former Astana)—that are located on the territory of modern Ukraine, Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. We study these cities through the prism of various scholarly approaches, as well as historical and visual sources. Literary texts are used not only as a means to illustrate certain historical processes but as artifacts that were instrumental in creating the identity of these cities within and beyond their territories. The ultimate goal of the course is to acquaint all participants with the dynamics of social, cultural, and political
development of the ten Eurasian cities, their urban layout and architectural features. The course also provides an overview of basic conceptual approaches to the study of cities and ongoing urbanization in Northern and Central Eurasia.  

* RUSS 355a / EVST 294a / HUMS 294a / RSEE 355a, Ecology and Russian Culture  
Molly Brunson  
Interdisciplinary study of Russian literature, film, and art from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, organized into four units—forest, farm, labor, and disaster. Topics include: perception and representation of nature; deforestation and human habitation; politics and culture of land-ownership; leisure, labor, and forced labor; modernity and industrialization; and nuclear technologies and disasters. Analysis of short stories, novels, and supplementary readings on ecocriticism and environmental humanities, as well as films, paintings, and visual materials. Several course meetings take place at the Yale Farm. Readings and discussions in English.  

* RUSS 465a / FILM 429a / LITR 466a, War in Literature and Film  
Katerina Clark  
Representations of war in literature and film; reasons for changes over time in portrayals of war. Texts by Stendahl, Tolstoy, Juenger, Remarque, Malraux, and Vonnegut; films by Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Joris Ivens, Coppola, Spielberg, and Altman.  