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 120b, First-Year Russian II  Julia Titus
Continuation of RUSS 110. After RUSS 110 or equivalent.  L2 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  Irina Dolgova
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 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 152a, Mastering Oral Communication in Russian  Irina Dolgova
The goal of this course is to improve students’ communicative competence in Russian through a focus on their pronunciation and listening skills within a variety of topics such as academic life, art, music, finance, technology etc. By the end of the course students are able to communicate their ideas, express agreement and disagreement, and persuade and settle for a compromise within broad cultural and social topics in a more intelligible and natural way in Russian. Prerequisite: L5 students and instructor’s permission.  L5
RUSS 160a, Fourth-Year Russian I  Anastasia Selemeneva
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  Anastasia Selemeneva
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 Peter I; D. Merezhkovsky’s Antichrist; N. Eidelman’s Decembrists; P. Chaadayev’s Philosophical Letters; N. Leskov’s Enchanted Wanderer (fragments); and I. Goncharov’s Oblomov (fragments). Films include A. Tarkovsky’s Andrei Rublev; N. Mikhalkov’s Several Days from Oblomov’s Life; A. Askoldov’s Commissar; Todorovsky’s Stiliagi; K. Muratova’s Asthenic Syndrome; and A. Zviagintsev’s Loveless. All written assignments, texts, and discussions are in Russian. RUSS 142 or 151, or permission of instructor. L5, HU

* RUSS 177b, Fantastika: Russian Fantasy and Science Fiction  Anastasia Selemeneva
This course explores the fantastic in Russian literature and film, while further advancing communicative competence in the Russian language. We trace the development of the fantastic in Russian literature and film in the 20th and 21st centuries, with an eye toward science fiction, which emerged and rose to prominence during the Soviet era. Among the questions we consider are the tension between imagined and real societies and how alternative worlds explore the nature of our own being; the impact of technical progress on human race and whether science fiction anticipates scientific innovation and social change; the appeal of the fantastic to a contemporary reader and how science fiction meets the human need for a desired past or future. Taught in Russian. Prerequisite: RUSS 161 or instructor’s permission. L5, HU

* RUSS 222a / FILM 369a / HUMS 186a / RSEE 244a, 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.

* RUSS 246b / RSEE 246b, Love and Death in the Russian Short Story  Edyta Bojanowska  
A brilliant counterpart to the expansive Russian novel, the Russian short story is held in high esteem by the genre’s connoisseurs and practitioners. This course explores both the classics and the hidden gems of the Russian short-story tradition from the 19th century to today, focusing on the most universal themes of story-writing: love and death. The course poses the following questions: What is distinctive about the short story form? How do stories “talk to” other stories in a tradition? What narrative twists and complications do authors use to keep readers hooked and spellbound? The readings cover most major Russian writers and movements, so the course provides a good overview of modern Russian literature. All readings and discussion in English.

RUSS 257b / THST 257b, Chekhov  John MacKay  
Close analysis of the major stories and plays of Anton Chekhov. Chekhov’s innovations in narrative and dramatic form; the relationship of the works to their complex times. The importance of Chekhov for theatrical practice worldwide, as mediated by Stanislavsky and others. Readings and discussion in English.

* 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 historiography 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 313a / LITR 210a / RSEE 313a / SLAV 313a and SLAV 613a / THST 314a, Art and Resistance in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine  Andrei Kureichyk  
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 / EAST 316a / LITR 303a / RSEE 316a, Socialist ’80s: Aesthetics of Reform in China and the Soviet Union  
Jinyi Chu
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 324b / RSEE 322b, The Master and Margarita: Money, Sex, and Power in Stalin’s Russia  
Nariman Shelekpayev
Mikhail Bulgakov’s The Master and Margarita is the most popular Russian novel of the twentieth century. Its plot, which describes the Devil’s visit to Moscow in the 1930s, has no analogues in modern Russian literature: it mixes ingeniously the elements of adventure, romance, history, philosophy, fantasy, and satirical novels. Bulgakov worked on his magnum opus for twelve years, from 1928 and until his death in 1940. The novel, however, was not published until 1966, when the first section appeared in the magazine Moskva, which sold out within hours. For contemporary readers, Bulgakov’s text is a treasure trove of insight about society, culture, morality, economics, power, religion, entertainment, politics, police, and everyday life in the Stalin era. But Bulgakov also raises deep philosophical issues: the various chapters of The Master and Margarita are case studies dealing provocatively and in depth with the meaning of life and the fear of death, good and evil, love and loyalty, ethics and responsibility, and so much more. As a bonus, the final chapters offer us Bulgakov’s own recipe for happiness. During the semester, we dive into the intricacies of Bulgakov’s narrative, studying not only the structure, content, and characters of the novel, but also—through some visual sources and scholarly articles—the history of Stalinist Moscow, and the textual sources that permeate the book, from the Bible, Goethe’s Faust, and Dante’s The Divine Comedy, to Gogol and Pushkin, to Bulgakov’s fellow writers and philosophers.
* RUSS 325a / HIST 293a / RSEE 325a / URBN 303a, Ten Eurasian Cities  Nariman Shelekpayev
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 480a and RUSS 481b, Directed Reading in Russian Literature  Staff
Individual study under the supervision of a faculty member selected by the student. Applicants must submit a prospectus approved by the adviser to the director of undergraduate studies by the end of the first week of classes in the term in which the course is taken. The student meets with the adviser at least one hour each week, and takes a final examination or writes a term paper. No credit granted without prior approval of the director of undergraduate studies.  

* RUSS 490a and RUSS 491b, The Senior Essay  Staff
Research and writing on a topic of the student’s own devising. Regular meetings with an adviser as the work progresses from prospectus to final form.