

Russian Area Studies

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAJOR

Director: *Tumarkin (History)*

Advisory Committee: *Hodge^A (Russian), Kohl (Anthropology), Tumarkin (History), Weiner (Russian)*

Sir Winston Churchill called Russia “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” The Russian Area Studies program explores Russia and the former Soviet Union, a vast region stretching from Poland to the Pacific Ocean, a land of extremes: anarchy and totalitarianism; super-growth and stagnation; stability and dramatic volatility. The world’s largest producer of oil and gas, Russia has also given the world one of its most glorious literary and musical canons. The Russian Area Studies program is based on the premise that the region is best explored through an interdisciplinary study of its culture, history, politics, and language. The program prepares students for a range of careers, including work in government, business, academia, and the arts.

Goals for the Major

an informed understanding of Russia’s and Eurasia’s place in today’s world, the goals and values espoused by its leadership, and the challenges the region faces

a learned appreciation of the vast diversity of the broad Eurasian space, which for millennia has been inhabited by a multitude of peoples and an understanding of how those peoples and cultures have interacted over time

a familiarity with the basic structures and dynamics of Russian and Eurasian historical development, including the nature of autocracy, dictatorship and empire

a proficiency in the Russian language sufficient for advanced study of its rich literary canon

a familiarity with enough classic Russian literature and other cultural works for an understanding of the major themes in Russian culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

experience in critical reading, writing essays and oral communication

a critical knowledge of methods used by scholars of literature, history and the social sciences

RAST 211/ANTH 211 Wintersession Program in the Republic of Georgia

Kohl (Anthropology)

Students travel to Tbilisi, Georgia, for Wintersession. They attend lectures in English at Tbilisi State University on Georgian history, language and culture and on contemporary political developments there and visit sites of historical interest in and around Tbilisi. They live with Georgian families and spend three weeks completing a self-designed internship with a local organization. *Students may register for either RAST 211 or ANTH 211 and credit will be granted accordingly. Not offered every year. Subject to Dean’s Office approval.*

Prerequisite: One course in Russian Area Studies or Anthropology. Application required.

Distribution: Social and Behavioral Analysis or

Historical Studies

Semester: Wintersession

Unit: 0.5

RAST 212/ES 212 Lake Baikal: The Soul of Siberia

Moore (Biological Sciences) and Bishop (Russian)

NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10. OFFERED IN 2010-11. The ecological and cultural values of Lake Baikal—the oldest, deepest, and most biotically rich lake on the planet—are examined. Lectures and discussion in spring prepare students for the three-week field laboratory taught at Lake Baikal in eastern Siberia in August. Lectures address the fundamentals of aquatic ecology and the role of Lake Baikal in Russian literature, history, art, music, and the country’s environmental movement. Laboratory work is conducted primarily out-of-doors and includes introductions to the flora and fauna, field tests of student-generated hypotheses, meetings with the lake’s stakeholders, and tours of ecological and cultural sites surrounding the lake. *Students may register for either RAST 212 or ES 212 and credit will be granted accordingly. Not offered every year. Subject to Dean’s office approval.*

Prerequisite: ES 101 or BISC 111, RUSS 101, and permission of the instructors. Preference will be given to students who have also taken HIST 211. Application required.

Distribution: Natural and Physical Science

Semester: N/O. Offered In 2010-11.

Unit: 1.25

RAST 350 Research or Individual Study

Prerequisite: Open by permission to juniors and seniors.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

RAST 360 Senior Thesis Research

Prerequisite: By permission of director. See Academic Distinctions.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

RAST 370 Senior Thesis

Prerequisite: 360 and permission of department.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

Related Courses

For Credit Toward the Major

ANTH 247 Societies and Cultures of Eurasia

ANTH 319 Nationalism, Politics, and the Use of the Remote Past

CPLT 284 Magical Realism

HIST 211 Bread and Salt: Introduction to Russian Civilization

HIST 246 Vikings, Icons, Mongols, and Tsars

HIST 247 Splendor and Serfdom: Russia under the Romanovs

HIST 248 The Soviet Union: A Tragic Colossus

HIST 301 Seminar. Women of Russia: A Portrait Gallery

POL2 206 Politics and Foreign Policy of Russia

RUSS 251 The Nineteenth-Century Russian Classics: Passion, Pain, Perfection (in English)

RUSS 255 Soviet and Russian Film (in English)

RUSS 272 Politically Correct: Ideology and the Nineteenth-Century Russian Novel (in English)

RUSS 276 Fedor Dostoevsky: The Seer of Spirit (in English)

RUSS 277 Lev Tolstoy: Russia's Ecclesiast (in English)

RUSS 286 Vladimir Nabokov (in English)

RUSS 333 Nineteenth-Century Russian Narrative Poetry: Tales of Mystery and Adventure (in Russian)

RUSS 376 Fedor Dostoevsky's Short Stories (in Russian)

RUSS 377 Lev Tolstoy's Short Stories (in Russian)

RUSS 386 Vladimir Nabokov's Short Stories (in Russian)

In addition to the courses listed above, students are encouraged to incorporate into their Russian Area Studies programs the rich offerings from MIT and Brandeis.

Requirements for the Major

A major in Russian Area Studies consists of a minimum of eight units. Majors are normally required to take four units of the Russian language above the 100 level: RUSS 201-202 and RUSS 301-302. In addition, a major's program should consist of at least four non-language units drawn from Russian Area Studies, Russian history, literature, and politics, as well as relevant courses in anthropology and comparative literature (see listings above). At least two of a major's units should come from outside the Russian department and the Comparative Literature program. Majors are normally required to take at least two units of 300-level coursework, at least one of which should be drawn from outside the Russian department.

Study Abroad and Graduate Study

Majors are encouraged to take advantage of various programs of study in the former Soviet Union, including the opportunity to spend a semester or year on exchange at a university in Russia or one of the other former Soviet republics. Majors who are contemplating postgraduate academic or professional careers in Russian Area Studies are encouraged to consult with faculty advisors, who will assist them in planning an appropriate sequence of courses. For more information on the Russian Area Studies program, students may consult the Wellesley College Russian Area Studies Web pages: www.wellesley.edu/Russian/RAS/rashome.html.

Honors

Seniors who wish to graduate with honors in the major must write an Honors thesis. Applicants for honors must have minimum 3.5 GPA in all work in the major field above the 100 level; the department may petition on her behalf if her GPA in the major is between 3.0 and 3.5. Interested students should discuss their ideas and plans with their advisor, the program chair, or a member of the advisory committee as early as possible in their junior year.

As of 8/10/09