

**Russian for Conversation**  
Russian 3050  
MWF from 1:10 - 2:00 PM  
Dr. Susanna Weygandt

Instructor: Dr. Susanna Weygandt  
*pronounced: Dr. Why-ghant*

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This course focuses on advancing students' knowledge of spoken Russian and their understanding of linguistic registers. The goal is to improve students' fluency as well as their ability to speak in Russian with nuanced diverse speech acts that native speakers of Russian use.

This course will build upon students' foundation of Russian language and help students speak Russian and apply different Russian grammatical constructions to various contexts by involving students in interactive activities. The fluency level of this course allows us to do activities involving poetry, interactive dialogue for conversation practice, in addition to textbook exercises. These materials also review and amplify grammar, helping students read, write compositions, and speak at the intermediate level. Throughout the semester, systematic study of word formation and other strategies are taught to help free students from excessive dependence on the dictionary and develop confidence in reading, writing, and speaking in Russian. Readings in the textbook, in addition to readings that supplement the textbook, provide historical and cultural background and introduce students to the original writings of Russia's canonical authors.

### **Course Objectives**

This course is designed in accordance with three *C's* of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999): it will emphasize *connections* between Russian language and students' academic interests, familiarize students with Russian *culture*, and it will improve *communication* skills - mainly speaking - in addition to writing, reading, grammar and listening. Additional goals include:

- Acquiring an understanding of several aspects of Russian culture (e.g., greeting and hospitality rituals, geography of Russia, broad outline of Russian history, familiarity with the great works of Russian writers);
- Interpreting, communicating, and understanding Russian in authentic cultural contexts;
- Further developing intonation and pronunciation through the practice of phonetics and recitals of Russian poetry;

- Learning etiquette of writing letters and e-mails;
- Improving written Russian and gaining experience writing in Russian in a more extended form, from single-paragraph to two-paragraph descriptions about topics relating to school, work, community, and service to the community.
- Expressing thanks, sympathy and opinions, and giving advice, compliments, suggestions, invitations, and orders using sophisticated grammatical expressions;
- Speaking about various topics (mainly academic and cultural) for an extended period of time.

**Required Text** *Этикетные выражения*

**Material to supplement grammar textbook:**

We will cover a chapter (Chapter Six) from *Russian Cinema for Conversation* by Olga Kagan, Mara Kashper and Yuliya Morozova. Scan of Chapter Six: *Москва слезам не верит* (*Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*) will be distributed to students;

Selected poems by Tiuchev, Fet, Pushkin, and Mayakovsky (in poetry packet) will be distributed to students.

Bring to class every day your *Этикетные выражения* textbook and your homework, ready to turn in upon arrival in our classroom at the beginning of class. For those who feel they need to brush up on their knowledge of English grammar, I recommend *English Grammar for Students of Russian*, 2nd ed. Cruise. Olivia Hill Press.

You may certainly bring a pocket dictionary to class if you find it helpful. However, the vocabulary we will be using in class will be provided in the textbook.

**Required Course**

<b>Class participation</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Homework</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Oral quiz (group skit)</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Unit tests (3 at 10% each)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Midterm exam</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Final exam</b>	<b>15%</b>

**Class Participation**

We will alternate between grammar drills and more complex explanations about culture, pronunciation and intonation, and the analysis of texts that you will read, hear, speak, and write. In the process of learning Russian, you will find that your study skills improve, your knowledge of English grammar improves, your muscle memory flexes, and that you learn to think on your feet to solve linguistic and cultural problems.

Vocal input is key to language learning! It is to your advantage to speak as much Russian in class as possible. If you can formulate a question in Russian, please do (even if you don't know how to say it exactly). If you feel, however, that you cannot formulate a question in Russian, you may ask questions in English. If I say something in Russian that you do not understand, do not hesitate to ask for clarification in English or in Russian.

Students are expected to participate in all grammar drills and partner and group exercises.

Whenever the class is doing exercises that require you to speak Russian, especially in small groups, you will be expected to keep your conversation in Russian. Unpreparedness, lack of participation, and using English when Russian is required will result in a reduction of the daily participation grade. Often we will do pair and group activities when you will be assigned to complete a task in Russian; you are expected to use Russian in these situations even if you have to work your way around a word or concept you don't know. Don't be afraid to make mistakes! Remember, you can't learn to swim without getting wet.



### **Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance is crucial for mastering a foreign language. In the case of illness, religious holidays, family emergencies, or university obligations such as sporting competitions or volunteering, please notify me in advance of your absence. Otherwise, it will be marked as an unexcused absence. For every five unexcused absences a student incurs (including labs) over the course of the quarter, that student's overall grade will be lowered by one letter grade (e.g. from an A- to a B+).

Attendance will be graded on a five-point scale. Students who arrive to class on time receive the full five points for daily attendance. A one-point penalty will be imposed on the class attendance grade for each 10 minutes you are late for each class.

### **Homework**

Assignments are intended to give students the opportunity to practice the vocabulary and grammatical concepts discussed in class and therefore homework should be done in a timely manner. All homework must be completed by the beginning of the class on the date it is assigned. Each homework assignment will be graded on a 5-point scale. Homework turned in on time, which is 90% or more correct will receive 5 points. 4 points will be given to homework that is at least 80% correct, and turned in on time at the beginning of each class. 3 points to homework that is 70% correct; 2 points to homework that is 60% correct; and 1 point to homework that is 50% correct. Incomplete and/or poorly done work will not receive any points. For every day an assignment is late, one point will be deducted. No homework will be accepted after 5 calendar days, including weekends.

It is understandable that mistakes on homework will happen, but please show that you have learned from mistakes on the subsequent homework assignments. Repeated grammatical mistakes over the course of one unit will be noted, which will result in a reduced homework grade.

While you may discuss any aspect of the grammar or homework with fellow students, it is essential that you sit down and do the assignment itself on your own so that I can accurately judge your

understanding of the material. Also, take pride in your ability to write beautiful Russian cursive! No backsliding into printed Russian!

### Oral quiz

At the end of the semester students will write and perform a short skit and will receive an oral quiz grade for their skits based on content (use of wide range vocabulary); accuracy (correct verb conjugations and noun declensions); and pronunciation (stress falling on correct syllables). Students will memorize their dialogue because elocution improves when performing memorized text. I will provide clear guidelines, printed out, about how I assess your oral grade for this assignment.

### Tests

Students will take unit tests that are based on the material in chapters of our textbook. **The first test will be on Feb. 7th** and will test for knowledge of Unit 1 and 2.

### Midterm

The midterm on **March 9th** will be similar in structure as the unit tests, but it will include an additional verbal communicative task in which students will be asked to negotiate a situation similar to those practiced in the textbook; this performance will be assessed on the basis of oral communicative success.

### Final exam

The final exam will be cumulative and will consist of both written and oral components. Assume that any material that we've reviewed in this course could appear on the final exam. You will be given a study guide to help you prepare for the final exam.



### Grading Scale

The following grading scale applies to this course:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| A 93-100 | Excellent and complete fulfillment of course requirements |
| A- 90-92 | Complete fulfillment of course requirements               |

B+ 87-89	Very good comprehension of required course materials
B 83-86	Good knowledge of required information
B- 80-82	Above average understanding of course materials
C+ 77-79	Slightly above average comprehension of required materials
C 73-76	Average understanding of required information
C- 70-72	Below average comprehension of course information
D 65-69	Insufficient knowledge of required materials
F 64 & under	Failure to complete even basic course requirements

### **Classroom Courtesy and Intellectual Pluralism**

In an effort to foster intellectual diversity and a respect for each student's rights, it is necessary to maintain a classroom atmosphere that encourages discussion of a broad variety of ideas and informed opinions. In order for each student's voice to be valued equally, certain guidelines must be followed:

1. Students are to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to respect the dignity of all, even in the midst of intellectual disagreements, so that others may entertain ideas (perhaps not fully formulated) without fear of ridicule or reproach.
2. Students are to silence and to store their cell phones and PDAs for the duration of the course.
3. The use of computers for taking notes and reading assigned texts is encouraged, but personal business (e.g., Web surfing, sending messages, and playing games) must be conducted outside the classroom. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the loss of computer privileges during class for the duration of the semester and will adversely affect the student's participation grade.

### **Student Success Center Syllabus Statement:**

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students can visit [www.slu.edu/success](http://www.slu.edu/success) to learn more about:

Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning).

### **Disability Services Academic Accommodations Syllabus Statement**

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations **must** contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also **must** notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the

course.

Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at [Disability\\_services@slu.edu](mailto:Disability_services@slu.edu) or 314.977.3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact to Disability Services.

### **Title IX Syllabus Statement**

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; [akratky@slu.edu](mailto:akratky@slu.edu); 314-977-3886) and share

the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy> [www.slu.edu/here4you](http://www.slu.edu/here4you) .

### **Academic Integrity Syllabus Statement**

*Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors.* The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at: [http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic\\_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%206-26-15.pdf](http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%206-26-15.pdf).

*The course instructor reserves the right to make periodic changes to the syllabus as a means of addressing the changing needs sometimes required to meet the course objectives*