

Русский язык 304: Contemporary Russian in Cultural Context

понедельник, среда и пятница 11:00-11:50, Гейлор 224

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Приёмные часы	понедельник 13:00-14:30, четверг 10:30-12:00, и по просьбе А также 12:00 – 12:30 по понедельникам, средам и пятницам

Prerequisites: *RUSN 301 or placement*

Students engage in advanced study of contemporary standard Russian by examining issues relevant to current Russian society. Special attention is devoted to post-Soviet Russian culture through analysis of newspapers and television news and current media (in a variety of print, audio, digital and video forms), selections of recent prose fiction, and cinema. The course emphasizes problems of syntax and idiomatic Russian by providing in-depth practice in the Russian language, with an emphasis placed on self-expression and helping students develop a deeper understanding of Russian grammar and syntax.

Данный курс предназначен для студентов III/IV бакалавриата, изучающих русский язык как иностранный. В основе курса – грамматические структуры русского языка. Освоение грамматических структур построено на основе практических упражнений. Особое место отводится работе с видами русского глагола, чтению и дискуссии русских новостей, чтению литературы и развитию письменной речи.

Students will hone their skills in three critical modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) and will participate in activities corresponding to the culture, comparisons, connections, and communities standards in ACTFL's World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. Students engage in advanced study of contemporary standard Russian by examining issues relevant to current Russian society.

A monthly schedule will be distributed to students in advance of each month and will include daily lesson and homework plans.



STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- a. By the end of the course, students should place at or close to the Advanced proficiency level (продвинутый уровень / продвинутый начальный подуровень) for speaking, reading, writing, and listening according to the ACTFL guidelines;
- b. Express reactions, feelings, and opinions through students' speaking, writing, and in-class debates activities;
- c. Further develop intonation and pronunciation through the practice of phonetics and also recitals of Russian poetry and dramatic text;
- d. Express thanks, sympathy and opinions, and giving advice, compliments, suggestions, invitations, and orders using sophisticated grammatical expressions;
- e. Improve written Russian and gain experience writing in Russian in a more extended form, including letters and short essays;
- f. Improve translation skills;
- g. Expand active vocabulary, oral proficiency, reading comprehension, and listening skills in Russian;
- h. Improve students' fluency as well as their ability to speak in Russian with nuanced diverse speech acts.

This course fulfills General Education: G6: Comprehending Cross -Culturally (Language)

- i. Speak about various topics that are not just personal, but also relate to the community, politics, society for an extended period of time;
- j. Interpret, communicate, and understand Russian in the context of authentic cultural contexts about contemporary Russian culture;
- k. My classroom instruction fosters student growth in interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication skills. This means that the approach taken in our learning community helps students to better comprehend oral and written texts through deep, interactive learning that engages back-and-forth conversations, and written and oral presentations in the target language;
- l. Students will be able to compare how certain American structures, such as law and government, differ from those structures in Russia by having a conversation in Russian about a political and social topic with a specialist in law in Russia via Skype.
- m. Students come closer to Russian culture by comparing it to their own society and community.

Required Text

Faces of Contemporary Russian (Olga Mesropova)

Bring to class every day your textbook and your homework, ready to turn in upon arrival in our classroom at the beginning of class. This semester we will cover Chapters 1-5 of *Faces of Contemporary Russian*

Supplementary grammar and material for content-based instruction

We will work with one chapter from *Cinema for Russian Conversation: Book 2* (Olga Kagan) - I will provide students with a photo copy of this chapter and its focus on one contemporary film. Supplementary reference material from Derek Offord's *Modern Russian*, which I will give to students.

When learning about participles and gerunds, we will also work from a few sections of *An Advanced Russian Tabloid Reader* by Joseph Mozur (photocopies provided for students).

Resources to help students with grammar

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. I recommend *501 Russian Verbs*, which can be bought online at Abebooks for \$3.65

In class we occasionally review Russian grammatical cases. Students who benefit from a refresh of Russian grammar are encouraged to review the elaborate Powerpoints of grammatical cases that I post on Blackboard. My Powerpoints include sentences with blanks in which students are prompted to insert the correct noun declension or verb conjugation and then test their accuracy on the following slide.



Course Grade

Class participation	10%
Attendance	10%
Homework	10%
Oral quizzes (2 at 5% each)	10%
Unit tests (2 at 10% each)	10%
Midterm exam	10%
Final exam	10%
Co-curricular Events	5%
Weekly Meeting with Russian House Director	5%
Special Projects (4 at 5% each)	20%

Special Projects to improve Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Reading skills (20% total)

- a. **Translation of Soviet Childrens’ stories:** I invite students to translate a short selection of Soviet children’s literature, thus providing students with the opportunity to take an active

role in this literature. This literature was designed to teach a young generation about communism. It was also written by poets and artists of the Soviet avant-garde. Students will receive two grades for the translation, with the first grade for a draft, and the second grade for a revised translation based on my feedback. I invite all students to publish their translations on the Digital Humanities archive of *Playing Soviet: The Visual Images of Early Soviet Children's Books, 1917-1953*, for which I formally worked as the Program Manager.

<http://commons.princeton.edu/soviet/%3Cfront%3E>

- b. **Challenge/Челлендж:** You will create a “challenge” for yourself, such as memorizing a poem in Russian, singing a Russian song, designing a website in Russian, or translating a news article. Another suggestion would be collaborating with a partner to subtitle a contemporary Russian film, and then the university could watch your film during an event. In class (at a suggested time) you will present your challenge visually on a poster and tell us - in Russian - what was challenging, how you went about mastering your challenge, and what you learned that is new. / В конце вы должны подвести результаты своего челленджа/задачи и представить его визуально, например на плакате: как и что делал, что было трудно, что узнал нового, что посоветовал бы студенту, который тоже хочет заняться таким делом.
- c. **Debates:** The topic of the debate will be “Clothing as a marker of gender, labor, and class /Внешность как символ пола и профессии.”
- d. **Writing response to film.** Directions will be provided in class.

Oral quizzes (2 quizzes, a total of 10% of course grade)

One oral quiz will include a communicative task in which students will be asked to negotiate a situation similar to those practiced in the textbook. Students will receive another oral quiz grade for a devised short skit based on content (use of wide range vocabulary); accuracy (correct verb conjugations and noun declensions); and pronunciation (stress falling on correct syllables). You will get the sense that my love of theater has been a skill that is highly applicable to language pedagogy for helping students review grammar, improve pronunciation, and gain confidence speaking a foreign language. 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. (**Learning outcomes a., b., g.; General Education outcomes h., i. k.**)

Tests (2 total for 20%)

Two unit tests will assess knowledge of material from the textbook *Faces of Contemporary Russia*. These unit tests will include grammar questions that will help you prepare for your comprehensive exam in the spring. Other aspects of the tests will assess reading and listening comprehension. You will also write short compositions related to the topics covered in our textbook *Faces of Contemporary Russia*. Writing will take place outside of class as a “take home” component of the tests so as to use class time as effectively as possible. **The first test will be on September 13.** I will provide information in class about how to prepare for tests. (**Learning outcomes a., d., e.; General Education outcomes h., j. l.**)

Midterm exam (10%): The midterm exam is designed as Integrated Performance Assessments (IPA) to test proficiency of reading, writing, and interactive dialogue all in Russian. I was trained in these communicative assessments at Middlebury's Summer Intensive Language Program. These assessments are structured according to ACTFL's methods of assessment of proficiency achievement. Content will include material covered in chapters of the textbook that we have reviewed, but the design of the test is oriented towards assessment of writing, spontaneous dialogue, reading and interpretive tasks. You will be given a study guide to help you prepare for the midterm. **(Learning outcomes c., e., g.; General Education outcomes h., j. k.)**

Final Exam (10%): The exam is designed as Integrated Performance Assessments (IPA) to test proficiency of reading, writing, and presentational speaking all in Russian. These assessments are structured according to ACTFL's methods of assessment of proficiency achievement. The intention of this design is to improve your performance and proficiency in Russian and offer you opportunities to apply the grammar in active, engaging, and content-based exercises which will prepare you for real-world and professional application of your Russian language knowledge. 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. **(Learning outcomes c., e., g.; General Education outcomes h., j. l.)**

Please follow the official schedule for final exams as published by the Registrar (see <http://registrar.sewanee.edu/schedule/college-of-arts-and-sciences-examinations/>).

The last day for submitting written work is the last day of classes: Wednesday, December 11. This deadline helps students by requiring them to finish work in a timely fashion so that they can prepare for exams (and helps faculty by providing sufficient time to grade such written work, even with impending exams).

Weekly Meeting with the Russian House Director (5%): Once a week you will meet with our Russian House Director for a 20-minute Russian-language conversation session tailored to the materials covered in class that week. You can meet in groups of 2 students. Feel free to use this time to ask any questions you might have about your current homework and to receive feedback about writing drafts.

Part of your participation grade includes keeping a binder in which you'll keep your tests and writing assignments and dialogues of skits and scenarios. I would you like to purchase a 3-ring binder. Please decorate the front and back covers with images from newspapers, pictures, drawings, leaves, flowers, or other material to make a collage of images that represent Russian study for you. Please show me that you have a binder by September 30.

Co-curricular Events (5%): Since we are also learning about Russian society & culture, you are required to attend at least 5 events pertaining to Russian culture in the course of the semester. These might include going to the weekly Russian Table (time: Wednesdays 12:00-1:00pm; location: McClurg balcony), attending a Russian Department event, listening to a lecture on Russian history, culture, literature, or politics, attending a concert of Russian music, or visiting an exhibit.

Course Participation (10%):

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 (circumlocution). Some activities will include role-playing scenarios that emphasize speaking and listening and which resemble situations in Russia that students might encounter abroad. Don't be afraid to make mistakes! Remember, you can't learn to swim without getting wet.

We speak only Russian in class. If you feel, however, that you cannot formulate a question in Russian, you may ask in English, which I understand might be necessary when we review complex grammar. Indeed, the majority of language pedagogy theory suggests an immersion classroom setting in Russian with time to explain complex grammar in English. If I say something in Russian that you do not understand, do not hesitate to ask for clarification.

Attendance Policy (10%)

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 three unexcused absences a student incurs over the course, that student's overall course 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. Because the Foreign Service Institute of the U. S. Department of State ranks Russian as a category III language, meaning that it takes 1100 class hours to achieve "Professional Working Proficiency," grades for participation and attendance are maintained and are incorporated into your grade -

<https://www.state.gov/m/fsi/sls/c78549.htm>

Homework (10%)

Homework assignments are meant to review and reinforce in-class activities, prepare you for participation the following day, and give you opportunities to independently increase your knowledge base in Russian. 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 Russian cursive! No backsliding into printed Russian!**

Reading Before Class

If you have made an effort to work with the readings in advance, class time can be used more efficiently and we will all have more fun actually speaking Russian .

After class, try to *commit to memory* as much of the concepts, constructions, & new vocabulary as possible.

STANDARD GRADES BREAKDOWN

100 - 98	A+	4.33	77 - 74	C	2.00
97 - 94	A	4.00	73 - 71	C-	1.67
93 - 91	A-	3.67	70 - 68	D+	1.33
90 - 88	B+	3.33	67 - 64	D	1.00
87 - 84	B	3.00	63 - 61	D-	0.67
83 - 81	B-	2.67	60 - 0	F	0
80 - 78	C+	2.33			

HONOR CODE

You agreed to follow the Honor Code when you matriculated. All forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, are violations of the Honor Code and will be treated as such. If you ever have a question about an assignment or need additional help, please ask for assistance rather than jeopardize your academic career.

My grammar lessons include explanation of the logic of the structure of Russian so that you can interpret the meaning of any Russian text that I give you by recognizing roots of words, locating the subject of the sentence, and recognizing verb types and declension patterns. Therefore, the use of Google Translate for your writing exercises is not necessary. I also ask you to not use this internet device for your coursework. Please complete work for this course following the guidelines for Academic Honesty & the Honor Code, as explained on the college's website: <http://life.sewanee.edu/live/rules-for-the-honor-council>.

ADA STATEMENT

The University of the South is committed to fostering respect for the diversity of the University community and the individual rights of each member of that community. In this spirit, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the University seeks to provide students with disabilities with the reasonable accommodations needed to ensure equal access to the programs and activities of the University. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with Student Accessibility Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. If you have already requested accommodations, it is your responsibility to present your instructor with a copy of your academic accommodations letter from Student Accessibility Services which is located in the Dean of Students Office (931.598.1229). *Accommodations will not be provided without this documentation, and accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.* Additional information about accommodations can be found at <https://new.sewanee.edu/campus-life/playing/wellness-commons/university-wellness-center/student-accessibility-services/>. If you have questions about physical accessibility, please inform me so that we can ensure an accessible, safe, and effective environment.

Title IX. Sexual misconduct is a violation of federal Title IX law and University policy. Disclosure of sexual misconduct to University faculty, staff, or student leaders (i.e. proctors) is not confidential and these individuals are required to make reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX Coordinator. To report incidents of sexual misconduct, please file a report at ReportSexualMisconduct.sewanee.edu or contact the Title IX Coordinator (Dr. Sylvia

Gray, titleix@sewanee.edu). For more information on mandatory reporting please see the [Mandatory Reporter Policy](#). For resources on support or confidential disclosure, please refer to the [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).



The reasons for studying a critical language such as Russian are practical – proficiency in another language significantly increases one’s chances of getting a job, and it is a very sought after skill in the hiring criteria of the governmental sector. In addition, translation of business and literary material is demand. 25% of the world’s literature about science comes from Russia, and often scientific groups collaborate with Russian. For those interested in academic research in the humanities, some of the world’s most profound literature and critical theory originates in Russia. Above all, it is a beautiful language spoken across Eurasia, East Europe, and Russia. I am so happy that we are all going to focus on learning Russian this fall semester.