

School of Arts and Sciences

SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

www.pitt.edu/~slavic

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, Eastern and Central Europe have been among the most interesting, vibrant, and changing parts of the world. The emerging countries there are becoming major world players economically, politically, and socially, all of which make studying this region and its people vastly interesting and challenging. Majors in the Slavic department include students whose primary interest is languages or literature, who wish to enhance their career opportunities in a special way, who have an interest in the politics and culture of Russia and Eastern Europe, and who have a desire to explore their ethnic heritage.

The undergraduate program in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures offers a wide variety of courses in Russian, Polish, Serbian, Slovak, and Ukrainian language, literature, and culture, but remains primarily Russian-oriented. This fact reflects on the undergraduate level, the interests of most potential majors and, on the graduate level, the current needs of the field. At present, the undergraduate major is offered only in Russian, with the possibility of a self-designed major in Polish and Slovak. The Russian major stresses language proficiency, the study of major periods and authors, and the culture of the former Soviet Union.

Pitt is a great place to study Slavic language and literature for many reasons. The department maintains strong ties with the Center for Russian and East European Studies (REES), which operates under the sponsorship of the University Center for International Studies. Through their combined efforts, students and faculty have the opportunity to participate in exchanges and contacts with Eastern Europe. You will also benefit from a wide assortment of lectures and discussions featuring internationally recognized scholars in culture, politics, economics, and related fields in the Slavic world. Pitt also offers one of the richest collections of Polish library materials in the country, a sizable and growing collection of Russian and East European films on video, and vital interactions with such programs as film studies, cultural studies, REES, and general linguistics. Furthermore, the department's program in Slovak language, literature, and culture is the only such program in the United States, and one that additionally offers the opportunity for several students each year to study in Slovakia.

Many Russian majors continue their studies in graduate school or go on to careers in law, engineering, business, and government. Students of Polish, Slovak, Croatian, Serbian, Ukrainian, and Russian find a knowledge of those languages valuable in working in local Western Pennsylvania institutions, politics, business, health-related professions, and the media because of the large population in this region that traces its roots to the various Slavic nations of Eastern Europe. Additionally, the job opportunities for students in foreign language careers are virtually endless. Examples of careers you could pursue are foreign news correspondent, simultaneous interpreter, Peace Corps worker, U.S. customs agent, research librarian, elementary teacher for bilingual programs, travel agent, and archaeologist.

Required Courses for Majors

Thirty credits above the level of RUSS 0040 Intermediate Russian 2 are required. Those credits are to include at least one of either RUSS 0420 Russian Newspapers and Magazines or RUSS 430 Readings in Russian Literature; and one of RUSS 0850 Russian Culture 1 or RUSS 0860 Modern Russian Culture. All courses are 3 credits unless noted otherwise.



I. Core Classes

RUSS 0010 Elementary Russian I (5 cr.)

You will acquire basic skills in Russian pronunciation, speaking, listening, and writing during this course. Topics will include the present and past tenses, and the nominative, prepositional, and accusative cases. The course aims to go beyond rote textbook work and apply grammar and vocabulary to practical situations.

RUSS 0020 Elementary Russian II (5 cr.)

This course focuses on the aural comprehension of Russian as a means for developing spoken competence. Attention will be paid to the function of word order and intonation.

RUSS 0030 Intermediate Russian I (5 cr.)

This course completes the introduction to basic Russian grammatical structures. You will be introduced to unedited real-language texts for the first time.

RUSS 0400 Advanced Russian I

You will develop your reading, writing, and oral skills through grammar review and readings during this course. You will write compositions in Russian and will summarize and comment in Russian on your readings for the class.

RUSS 0410 Advanced Russian II

This course is a continuation of Advanced Russian I. It also tries to develop your reading, writing, and oral skills through grammar review and readings.

RUSS 0420 Nonliterary Readings

Readings for this course are taken from current Russian newspapers and magazines, and will deal with contemporary Russian life.

RUSS 0430 Literary Readings

You will be introduced to 19th- and 20th-century Russian literature through readings of short stories and poems by major Russian authors. At the same time, you will familiarize yourself with the lives and creative works of some outstanding Russian writers and with basic principles of literary analysis.

RUSS 0450 Intermediate Conversation

This course aims to enrich your vocabulary and improve your command of idioms, and gives you the opportunity to participate in simulated real-life situations (in stores, subways and buses, the university, etc.).

RUSS 0800 Masterpieces of the 19th Century

Selected masterpieces of Russian literature of the 19th century will be studied during this course. The chosen works will be studied and discussed for their intrinsic literary value and as examples of main literary trends.

RUSS 0810 Masterpieces of the 20th Century

This course will focus on selected masterpieces of 20th century Russian literature, particularly on four major authors: Bely, Pasternak, Babel, and Solzhenitsyn. The emphasis of the course is on the variety of prose popular in the 20th century, and on the emergence of new problems and perspectives and their expression in the context of Soviet Russia.

RUSS 0850 Russian Culture I

Russian culture from 988–1825 is studied, including religious, artistic, and ideological writings.

RUSS 0860 Modern Russian Culture

From the reign of Nicholas I to the Gorbachev administration, Russian intellectual and artistic discourse has repeatedly returned to the question of Russia's relationship with the West. This issue will provide the focus for an overview of the last two centuries.

RUSS 1202 Dostoevsky: The Major Novels*

You will closely and contextually examine Dostoevsky's major novels. Each text will be analyzed in the context of the cultural and intellectual debates that accompanied its reception in imperial Russia and the Soviet Union.

RUSS 1400 Morphology of Modern Russian

This course studies Russian word formation from a structural linguistic perspective.

RUSS 1500 History of Russian Literature I

This course covers the first half of 19th-century Russian literature from Karamzin to Nekrasov.

RUSS 1410 Advanced Russian Syntax

This course deals in Russian syntactic phenomena from both a structural linguistic and a practical point of view. By the end of the course you will be able to parse structures of varying degrees of complexity, ranging from simple to multiple complex sentences.

RUSS 1490 Listening Comprehension

RUSS 1510 History of Russian Literature II

The second half of 19th-century Russian literature is studied, from Turgenev to Chekhov.

* Instead of 1202 Dostoevsky, various other courses may be offered, e.g. Tolstoy: The Major Novels, Shorter Fiction of Major Novelists, Folklore.

II. Two courses in another single department (e.g. history, political science, economics)

Departmental Honors

In order to qualify for departmental honors, you must complete at least one additional 1000-level course in addition to a 20-page paper involving primary-source research and a two-page Russian summary. An appointed faculty committee will supervise the paper and summary.

Certificate Programs

Undergraduates should consider working toward a certificate in the Russian and East European studies program (REES) concurrently with a major or related area in the Slavic department. This certificate is a stimulating interdisciplinary program that provides you with an understanding of the history and culture of the nations of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as the critical political and economic transitions taking place in this region of the world. For more information, please contact REES, 4G Wesley W. Posvar Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, 412-648-7407, www.ucis.pitt.edu/crees.

For more information about the Slavic languages and literatures program, contact:

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For more information about other majors, please contact:

University of Pittsburgh
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Special Programs and Opportunities

Intensive Summer Language Instruction

Each year, the Slavic department and the Center for Russian and East European Studies sponsor the Russian and East European Summer Language Institute, which attracts students from across the nation to Pitt every summer. The program includes an eight-week session in Russian offered at the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels. Also offered are six-week intensive programs in beginning and intermediate Slovak, Polish, Serbian, and Croatian as well as beginning Bulgarian, Romanian, Macedonian, Ukrainian, and Hungarian. Participants include graduate students whose research requires advanced linguistic competence, undergraduates continuing or getting a head start on language acquisition, and nontraditional students interested in reclaiming their heritage. All classes are taught by native speakers who make use of film, cartoons, music videos, audiotapes, and prose and poetry in their teaching.

Cultural exposure is an important part of the program. Activities designed to familiarize participants with the cultural background of the target language include lectures, film screenings, ethnic cooking classes, singing and dancing classes, and performances, happy hours, and picnics. With a large Slavic and Eastern European population in the area, students also go on field trips to local churches, ethnic festivals, and the nationality days at Kennywood amusement park.

Russian Club

The Russian Club aims to promote awareness of the Russian language and culture throughout the University community. The group has planned activities like a trip to Moscow to volunteer at a hospital, conference trips to cities like Washington, D.C. and New York City, and screenings of Russian films.

Slovak Club

The University of Pittsburgh is located in the heart of one of the three areas with the largest concentration of Slovak Americans in the nation, which makes it ideally positioned for maintaining Slovakia's heritage. The Slovak Club is one way to accomplish that goal. The club's activities have ranged from discussions and film presentations to a Saint Nicolas talent night and the annual Slovak Talent Festival.

Polish and Ukrainian Clubs

These clubs sponsor a number of cultural and social activities throughout the academic year as a way to promote awareness of their respective cultures.

Study Abroad

Studying abroad is an exciting way to add an international perspective to your undergraduate education and strengthen your credentials as a graduate. Since only about 8 percent of American students have studied abroad, this experience distinguishes you when you enter the job market or pursue graduate study. The experience allows you to broaden your personal experience and gain an appreciation of other cultures while earning credits toward your degree. Scholarships are available, and financial aid is applicable.

Some study abroad programs of special interest to Slavic languages and literatures majors are:

Pitt in the Czech Republic

Pitt offers a six-week summer study abroad program that focuses on the extraordinary attractions of Prague, Czech Republic—its turbulent history, its distinctive art and architecture, and its current role as an emerging market of Central Europe. One week will also be spent in Poland's second largest city, Lodz. Six to nine Pitt credits can be earned in the program in courses focusing on business, art history, and history. Pitt faculty teach all the courses. During the program you will stay in student dormitories.

Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)—St. Petersburg, Russia

This study abroad program will take you to St. Petersburg, a mix of the new and old Russia, and a treasure chest of culture and history. Exhilarating and confusing, St. Petersburg is in the vanguard of change. The city is easily navigated by bus trolley and a highly efficient metro system, all of which makes attending the numerous music, dance, and theater events quite easy for you. This program runs for the fall, spring, or full academic year. While at St. Petersburg State University you will receive instruction in the Russian language and culture through the Center for Russian Language and Culture. The academic program is supplemented with excursions and field trips arranged by the resident staff and university representatives.