

## WELCOME TO BEGINNING RUSSIAN 20



Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 11:10 – 12:00

Schiffman TBA

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Congratulations! You've made it to the second semester of "Beginning Russian"!

### Course Description

An engaging textbook and accompanying video serve as a lively introduction to the basic building blocks of the Russian language and Russian cultural norms. Building on the material learned in the first semester, you will continue developing your vocabulary to reach about one thousand words, expand your pragmatic skills to include promises, requests and threats, and complete your understanding of the elementary Russian grammatical system.

### Course Learning Outcomes

If you adhere to your part of the "deal," after completing Beginning Russian 20

you will be able to:

- Talk about your interests, hobbies and personal preferences
- Compare and contrast things, ideas and people
- Describe your university studies: classes, exams and research papers
- Express your opinion, agreement (disagreement), surprise, frustration and some other emotions
- Invite friends and elders to do something together
- Order people around
- Make polite (and impolite) requests
- Give advice
- Make threats
- Make plans and give promises

You will also know and comprehend the following:

Grammar-

- the entire nominal, pronominal and adjectival declension system (all 6 cases!)
- expressions of necessity and obligation
- impersonal constructions expressing various states of mental and physical being
- verbal aspect (perfective and imperfective)
- unprefixated verbs of motion
- first and second-person commands
- past, present and future tenses

Culture

- some facts and names pertaining to Russian and Soviet “high” culture
- sociocultural norms of interpersonal communication
- basics of Russian worldview as coded in the language (how many fingers does a Russian human being have?)
- some basic facts about Russian and Soviet social history which shape the way Russians think about themselves and the others

Ultimately this knowledge and skills will bring you close to the Intermediate-Mid level of proficiency as defined by the ACTFL guidelines which is characterized in **speaking** by

- the ability to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated basic communicative tasks and social situations (such as shopping or traveling);
- describe self and family members, immediate environment, daily activities and personal preferences;
- express personal meaning by creating with the language by combining and recombining known elements and conversational input to make meaningful utterances of sentence and short-paragraph length; and
- to be understood fairly easily by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives despite frequent misunderstandings and inaccuracies.

(for more information go to

<http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/languagelearning/OtherResources/ACTFLProficiencyGuidelines/ACTFLGuidelinesSpeakingInterme.htm>)

**Required Materials**

The textbook is *Russian Stage One: Live From Moscow*, and comes with a workbook, CD and DVD (the disks are located inside the textbook and workbook covers). NOTE: the textbook and the workbook come in two volumes. We will finish the last chapter of VOLUME I before we begin with the first chapter of Volume II.

*Please note that VOLUME II is already at the bookstore. You can purchase it now or wait for two weeks until we finish VOLUME I.*

Volume II consists of 8 units; we will be able to finish only 5. We will resume in the fall (in Russian 30) with units 12 and 13 before switching to the next textbook in the series: “Welcome Back!” As with Volume I, each unit of Volume II consists of 9 days, each of which corresponds to one class period. The workbook clearly indicates the homework that goes with a particular day in a particular unit. We will frequently combine two days into one class period or students will have two days

worth of homework to complete, especially between a Friday and a Monday. Students will receive a detailed unit work plan at the beginning of each new unit.

## GRADING

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- 20% - Attendance, Preparation, and Participation
- 10% - Oral Practice Attendance
- 30% - Homework (3% for Culture Hunts)
- 25% - Unit Tests
- 10% - Final Written Examination
- 5% - Final Oral Examination

### Grading Scale

94-100 = A	74-76 = C
90-93 = A-	70-73 = C-
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+
84-86 = B	64-66 = D
80-83 = B-	60-63 = D-
77-79 = C+	59 and below = F

Please note that passing grade for this class (which allows you to continue to Russian 30) is C-.

### Homework

**Four or more missed homework assignments** will lower your final grade in the “Homework” category by one letter. Homework must be submitted on the day when it is due and will be returned to students on the following day in most cases. If you know that you will not be able to make it to class, submit your homework in advance or arrange for a friend to hand it in for you. (5 missed homeworks will earn you a “B+”, 6-7 missed homeworks – “B”, 8 missed homeworks – “B-“, etc.).

*Homework which is more than 4 class periods late will be accepted, but you will not receive any credit (even if they are done without a single mistake).*

Homework is evaluated with the following marks: 5 = A; 4 = B; 3 = C. A mark below ‘3’ is impossible. Instead you will receive a check-minus, which means that homework has systematic problems. Students **MUST** correct circled mistakes and re-submit the work. Full credit will be given only when all corrections are made and the work is re-submitted. Only one re-submission is allowed. *You have FOUR class periods to re-submit the homework.*

Culture Hunts: starting on the second week of the semester, you will receive a set of questions on Russian culture or history. These questions may include points about social and high culture as well as some linguistic interests (for example, why is the Russian alphabet called “Cyrillic”). You can explore the Internet resources, ask your Russian friends or go to the library. You are not allowed to simply copy the material from the Internet (e.g., Wikipedia articles); you must use your own words to describe. Please indicate the source of your information for every answer.

Attendance and Participation

You must hear Russian and use Russian in order to learn Russian. Therefore, it is essential that students attend classes and keep up with course work on a daily basis. Moreover, students who come to class unprepared fall behind and hold up the rest of the class. For these reasons, attendance is mandatory: **More than four** absences will result in the lowering of your final grade in the “Attendance and Participation” category: (5 absences earn you a “B+”, 6-7 absences – “B”, 8 – “B-“, etc.). Repeated or extreme tardiness WILL also be counted as absence.

You will receive a daily participation grade:

- 5 (A)                    **Well** prepared and **actively** participates
- 4 (B)                    Not (that well) prepared but actively participates (or was 10 minutes late)
- 3 (C)                    Not prepared but makes little or no effort to participate (or was 15 minutes late)
- 0 (F)                    Absent (or was more than 25 minutes late)

Extra Credit to make up for missed classes

You can earn extra credit by attending tutor sessions with BUGS tutor Olga Golovanova and/or one of the events organized by the Russian program throughout the semester (more credit is given to conversational table/Russian tea). Two visits to the tutor (for at least 20 minutes) or two Russian teas/conversational table will make up for one missed class. You will need to bring a form (obtainable from the tutor) signed by Olga or the leader of the Russian tea to receive credit.

*Classroom policies*

**Behavior:** You are expected to contribute to a respectful and positive learning environment. Please do not bring food to class. You should be able to finish your lunch either before or after class. It is hard to practice a foreign language while your mouth is busy with food.

**Punctuality** is essential. Therefore, only an occasional late arrival will be accepted.

**Cell phones:** The use of cell phones in class is strictly prohibited. Phones should be turned off and out of sight while class is in session. Absolutely no text-messaging.

**Speaking Russian:** as we move towards Intermediate-Mid level, English will be used in the classroom less and less. You should try to adhere to “mostly-Russian” rule as much as possible even for such simple acts as asking me to repeat or checking what page we are on.

Conversation Section

One day a week will be designated for conversation practice. You will work with a different instructor who is a native speaker of Russian. These days will focus on activating the material we learn in class during “grammar sessions”. **Oral quizzes** will be assigned once per unit and will be administered either during the Conversation Sessions or outside of class (you will have an opportunity to sign up for a quiz with the TA). Please note that attendance of conversational

practice is mandatory and is subject to the same attendance and participation policy as the attendance of “grammar sessions”.

### Unit Tests

A fifty-minute written test will be scheduled at the end of each unit. Sometimes the tests will be take-home. You will receive specific instructions on how to handle a take-home. Spelling counts for partial credit.

### Final Exam

There will be a three-hour final examination at the end of the semester. There will also be a final oral examination scheduled either during the last Conversational Practice day or during the last three days of the semester outside class time. Both exams will be based on the entire semester’s work with an emphasis on the last unit covered.

### **Group dynamics**

This class relies heavily on all of you working together. Some of you are faster at grasping new grammar concepts and memorizing new vocabulary while others require more time to process language information. Personality types also play a huge role in how people learn languages: some are afraid to speak in front of other people and are very shy; others are more outgoing and are not afraid of experimenting and taking chances. Please be patient with each other and be polite. The important thing to keep in mind is that you NEED each other to activate what you have learned at home. Be grateful for the fact that you have “comrades in arms” in your conquest of the Russian language!

### **Study-Abroad and other related opportunities**

Brandeis has 7 approved programs for studying Russian in the Russian Federation. You will be able to choose between summer programs, semester-long and year-long programs. Brandeis Russian Language Program recommends that you have at least 4 semesters of Russian before a study-abroad program. You are well on your way toward this goal! If you are interested in going abroad, please talk to your instructor and visit the Study Abroad office and website. There are several summer intensive Russian language programs in the U.S. The Russian program’s website lists a few of them. If you would like to know more about these programs, please talk to your instructor.

There are three list serves you may want to join.

- 1) Brandeis has a very active Russian Club. If you are interested in participating in events organized by the club, please sign up for their e-mail list.
- 2) If you are interested in receiving occasional messages with announcements about Russian language and culture related events, please sign up for the REES list serve

Links to all three list serves are available at the program’s website:

<http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/grall/russian/>

### **Useful Contacts**

The undergraduate advisor for the Russian language program is Prof. David Powelstock:  
[powelstock@brandeis.edu](mailto:powelstock@brandeis.edu)

The Russian program's Undergraduate Representative for the 2008-09 academic year is Nick Nestelbaum ([nickn@brandeis.edu](mailto:nickn@brandeis.edu)) and Leo Guyshan ([lguyshan@brandeis.edu](mailto:lguyshan@brandeis.edu)). They can answer many of your questions about choosing a Russian Studies major or minor.

This year's BUGS tutor for Russian is Olga Golovanova ([olgag@brandeis.edu](mailto:olgag@brandeis.edu)). You are highly encouraged to practice the language with her. She can help with pronunciation practice, homework questions, and cultural interests.

### **Statement on Brandeis Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person, be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner, without proper acknowledgement of that source.

Violations of University policies on academic integrity, described in Section Three of Rights and Responsibilities, may result in failure of the course or on the assignment, or in suspension or dismissal from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, it is your responsibility to ask your instructor for clarification.

Notice of accommodation: If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

SPECIAL NOTE: It is becoming a tradition of the Russian program to organize a Russian evening in celebration of the International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup>. I would like to invite our class to participate in this evening (it is really meant as a show of student talent). Please consult with your comrades and let me know if there is a project you'd like to present. It can be a song, a dance, a skit, an i-movie, a poetry reading, etc.