Why Russian Language and Literature at Brandeis?

Brandeis offers students the unique opportunity to acquire intermediate to advanced Russian language proficiency and a strong background in Russian literature and culture. Majors are encouraged to study abroad in Russia for a summer, semester, or full academic year. The Russian program at Brandeis is one of the few in the country to offer both a track for students with no prior experience with Russian (Track I) and a track designed specifically for Russian bilinguals or students arriving at Brandeis with advanced language proficiency (Track II). The Boston area is home to a vibrant Russian-speaking community.

Curriculum Overview

The major has two tracks:

- Track I is aimed at students with no prior knowledge of Russian.
- Track II is for heritage Russian speakers and students with advanced proficiency in Russian.

Both tracks require students to take the proseminar in European cultural studies.

Beyond the proseminar, Track I majors must complete three core courses in advanced language and literature study and five electives in Russian literature and culture (RECS).

Track II majors must take two core courses in advanced language and literature study beyond the proseminar and six electives in Russian literature and culture (RECS).

Electives for the Russian language and literature program include a wide variety of courses in literature and culture.

Literature courses examine the major writers and works that represent Russia in world culture, including Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Nabokov. A wider range of authors is covered in courses on the novel, the short story, drama, and poetry, and in courses devoted to nineteenth- and twentieth-century, and women's literature. The broader cultural context is emphasized in courses on culture, religion, folklore, Russian modernism, and East European literature.

While most of our literature and culture courses are taught in English in order to make them broadly accessible, students with advanced Russian skills may choose to do course readings in Russian.
Advanced language and literature courses that do not fall within a given student’s core may also be taken as electives. These classes offer exciting opportunities to study aspects of culture in the original Russian, and include poetry, short fiction, and film.

**Interdisciplinary program in Russian and East European studies**

Students may wish to broaden their major beyond language, literature, and culture by combining it with a minor in Russian and East European studies (REES), a separate interdisciplinary program.

**Other Benefits**

Our innovative language courses are taught exclusively in Russian. Grammar is presented in communicative contexts incorporating authentic multimedia materials.

We are proud to host one of the few Russian-language radio shows in the Boston area. The Russian Club at Brandeis actively sponsors events for Russian students and Russian speakers in the greater Boston community, including Russian-language film series, dances, and mailings about events in the region. The program also sponsors regular functions such as lectures and Russian tea hours featuring Russian-language conversation for students of all levels.

**Career and Education Opportunities**

Russian majors have the opportunity to use their language and culture skills in a broad variety of settings in both Russia and the United States. Students go on to work in business as financial and policy analysts for American and Russian companies. They work for nongovernmental organizations, for publishing houses, for the print and broadcast media. They teach in Russian schools, and consult in fields such as marketing, advertising, aerospace, and computer engineering. Some go on to work as teachers in universities and schools, and as employees of the United States government.

**Faculty**

Following is a list of department faculty members and their areas of specialization:

- **Marina Aptekman**  
  Russian language

- **Robin Feuer Miller**  
  The novel in Russia and Europe of the nineteenth century, the short story in Russia, the literature of childhood

- **David Powelstock**  
  Modern Russian literature, modern Czech literature, Russian and Czech languages, comparative literature, literary theory, translation studies