

An interdepartmental program

Courses of Study:  
Minor

# Russian and East European Studies

## Objectives

The program in Russian and East European studies (REES) provides undergraduates with a curricular framework for the interdisciplinary study of Russia, the former Soviet Union, and East Europe. This interdisciplinary study offers a special breadth and depth of understanding for this region and leads students to appreciate the interconnectedness of Russian and East European history, economics, politics, and culture. The complementary study allows participating students to achieve an understanding of this world region not otherwise available in existing majors and minors in the traditional disciplines. REES further maintains the extracurricular objective of hosting and facilitating special events concerning Russia and East Europe: presentations by visiting scholars, cultural events, and other learning activities. The program serves any interested undergraduates wishing to complement their major course of study; social science majors with an interest in the area and majors in Russian language and literature are encouraged to consider becoming program participants.

## How to Become a Minor

Interested students who have no background in Russian or any other East European language are advised to begin language training (with RUS 10a) in their first year. Appropriate placement of those with some knowledge of Russian can be arranged by consultation with the Department of German, Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature. Progress toward the minor will also be facilitated by early enrollment (usually in the sophomore year) in HIST 147a (Imperial Russia).

## Committee

### David Powelstock, Chair

(German, Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature)

### Steven Burg

(Politics)

### Irina Dubinina

(German, Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature)

### ChaeRan Freeze

(Near Eastern and Judaic Studies)

### Gregory Freeze, Dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

(History)

### Robin Feuer Miller (on leave 2008–2009)

(German, Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature)

### Antony Polonsky (on leave 2008–2009)

(Near Eastern and Judaic Studies)

## Requirements for the Minor

**A.** Students must complete the following courses: HIST 147a (Imperial Russia) and HIST 147b (Twentieth-Century Russia); and four semesters of Russian language, or the equivalent.

**B.** Completion of any three courses listed below, in at least two separate disciplines.

## Courses of Instruction

### REES 98a Independent Study

*Signature of the instructor and the program chair required.*

Usually offered every year.

Staff

### REES 98b Independent Study

*Signature of the instructor and the program chair required.*

Usually offered every year.

Staff

## Core Courses

### HIST 147a

Imperial Russia

### HIST 147b

Twentieth-Century Russia

## Elective Courses

The following courses are approved for the minor. Not all are offered in any one year. Please consult the *Schedule of Classes* each semester.

### COML 160a

Contemporary East European Literature

### FA 118b

Drawing upon Literature

### HIST 148b

Central Asia in Modern Times

### NEJS 136a

History and Culture of the Jews in East-Central Europe to 1914

### NEJS 137b

A History of the Jews in Warsaw, Lodz, Vilna, and Odessa

### POL 129a

East European Politics

**POL 213b**

Graduate Seminar: Selected Topics in Comparative Politics

**RECS 130a**

The Russian Novel

**RECS 134b**

Chekhov

**RECS 135a**

From Pushkin to Chekhov: The Short Story in Russia

**RECS 137a**

Women in Russian Literature

**RECS 146a**

Dostoevsky: Gods and Monsters

**RECS 147b**

Tolstoy: Freedom, Chance, and Necessity

**RECS 149b**

The Rise and Fall of Russian Modernism: Cultural and Political Revolutions, 1900–1934

**RECS 154a**

The Art of Vladimir Nabokov

**RUS 150b**

Advanced Russian Language through Literature

**RUS 153a**

Russian Poetry in Russian: Undergraduate Seminar

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## Russian Language and Literature

Courses of Study:

Minor

Major (BA)

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### Objectives

The Russian program offers students unique opportunities for the study of Russian language, culture, and literature. Our courses enable students to reach intermediate to advanced levels of language proficiency and attain a strong background in Russian culture and literature. Majors, are encouraged to study in Russia for a semester or a summer. Links to approved Brandeis semester programs in Russia can be found on the department Web site at [www.brandeis.edu/departments/grall](http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/grall).

**Undergraduate Major and Minor**

The core curriculum features courses in language, culture, and literature open to all students. Literature courses focusing on the classics of the nineteenth century are augmented by seminars on poetry and contemporary authors. Most of our literature courses are taught in English in order to make them accessible to a broad range of students. Bilingual students and advanced students of Russian may choose to do course readings in Russian. Language courses are taught exclusively in Russian. Grammar is presented in communicative contexts incorporating authentic multimedia materials. Our curriculum also includes courses on film, contemporary culture, and East European literature.

Bilingual students interested in Russian language study are encouraged to consult with the language coordinator to determine the appropriate course of study. Students may wish to broaden a major by combining it with a minor in Russian and East European studies (REES), a separate interdisciplinary program.

Brandeis offers a host of extracurricular opportunities for majors, minors, and students interested in Russian language and culture. The Department of German, Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature also sponsors regular functions for Russian students, including film series, lectures, and Russian tea hours featuring Russian language conversation for students of all levels. Many activities for those interested in Russian language and culture are organized by and for students. We are proud to host one of the few Russian-language radio shows in Boston. 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 Boston area.

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### How to Become a Major or a Minor

Students considering a Russian major or minor should complete the language requirement as soon as possible. Students who wish to discuss the two major tracks or issues of language placement should speak with the Russian language coordinator.

A major in Russian may obtain the Massachusetts teaching certificate at the high school level by additionally completing requirements of the education program. Interested students should meet with the program director.

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### Faculty

See the Department of German, Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature.

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## Requirements for the Minor

- A.** Advanced language study: RUS 105a or 106b.
- B.** Literature Study in Russian: RUS 150b or RUS 153a.
- C.** Literature study: Any three RECS courses, which may include the cross-listed courses below.

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## Requirements for the Major

- A.** ECS 100a or ECS 100b (European Cultural Studies: The Proseminar) to be completed no later than the junior year.
- B.** Advanced language and literature study: RUS 105a or 106b, 150b, and 153a.
- C.** Literature study: Any five RECS courses, which may include the cross-listed courses below.
- D.** Majors wishing to graduate with departmental honors must enroll in and complete RUS 99d (Senior Thesis), a full-year course. Before enrolling, students should consult with the coordinator. Candidates for departmental honors must have a 3.50 GPA in Russian courses previous to the senior year. Honors are awarded on the basis of cumulative excellence in all courses taken in the major and the grade on the honors thesis. One semester of the senior thesis may be counted toward the five required RECS courses.

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## Courses of Instruction

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### (1–99) Primarily for Undergraduate Students

#### RUS 10a Beginning Russian I

For students who have had no previous study of Russian. A systematic presentation of the basic grammar and vocabulary of the language within the context of Russian culture, with focus on all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Usually offered every year.  
Ms. Dubinina

#### RUS 20b Beginning Russian II

*Prerequisite: RUS 10a or the equivalent.*  
For students with some previous study of Russian. Continuing presentation of the basic grammar and vocabulary of the language within the context of Russian culture, and practice of the four language skills. Special attention to reading and writing skills, as well as guided conversation. Usually offered every year.  
Ms. Dubinina

#### RUS 30a Intermediate Russian I

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*Prerequisite: RUS 20b or the equivalent.*  
For students with some previous study of Russian (RUS 10a and 20b). Continuing presentation of the basic grammar and vocabulary of the language within the context of Russian culture. Special attention to reading and writing skills. Usually offered every year.  
Ms. Dubinina

#### RUS 40b Intermediate Russian II

[ fl hum ]  
*Prerequisite: RUS 30a or the equivalent.*  
Continuing presentation of the basic grammar and vocabulary of the language within the context of Russian culture. Special attention to reading and writing skills. Usually offered every year.  
Ms. Dubinina

#### RUS 98a Independent Study

*May be taken only with the permission of the adviser to majors and the chair of the department.*  
Reading and reports under faculty supervision. Usually offered every semester.  
Staff

#### RUS 98b Independent Study

*May be taken only with the permission of the adviser to majors and the chair of the department.*  
Reading and reports under faculty supervision. Usually offered every year.  
Staff

#### RUS 99d Senior Thesis

*Students should consult the area head of their major.*  
Usually offered every year.  
Staff

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### (100–199) For Both Undergraduate and Graduate Students

#### RUS 105a Russia Today: Advanced Language Skills through Contemporary Culture

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*Prerequisite: RUS 40b or the equivalent or permission of the instructor.*  
For advanced students of Russian language who wish to expand their vocabulary and develop their grammar and reading skills. Explores aspects of contemporary Russian society and culture. Texts will be drawn from contemporary prose, the Russian press (including the Internet, selected films, and pop culture). Usually offered every second year.  
Ms. Dubinina

#### RUS 106b Advanced Russian Language through Film

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*Prerequisite: RUS 40b or the equivalent or permission of the instructor.*  
For advanced students of Russian who wish to enhance their proficiency and accuracy in writing and speaking. Class discussions and writing assignments will focus on aspects of Russian society as they are portrayed in Russian film. Background readings about the films related to relevant aspects of Russian society and language will also be assigned. Usually offered every third year.  
Ms. Dubinina

#### RUS 110a Russian Language for Russian Speakers

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Designed to meet the needs of Russian language speakers who have had little or no formal training in their native language and who want to improve reading and writing skills. Readings range from short works of contemporary prose fiction to articles from the contemporary Russian press. Basic rules of orthography and advanced grammar topics will be reviewed. Usually offered every third year.  
Staff

#### RECS 130a The Russian Novel

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to do readings either in English translation or in Russian.*  
A comprehensive survey of the major writers and themes of the nineteenth century including Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and others. Usually offered every second year.  
Ms. Miller

**RECS 131a Nature, Man, and Machine: Twentieth-Century Russian Literature**

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to do readings either in English translation or in Russian.*

An introduction to the major works and authors of modernist, Soviet, and post-Soviet eras, including the emigration. Readings include works by Mayakovsky, Bely, Babel, Bulgakov, Nabokov, Akhmatova, Solzhenitsyn, and Pelevin. Usually offered every second year.  
Mr. Powelstock

**RECS 134b Chekhov**

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to do readings either in English translation or in Russian.*

Offers a detailed investigation of the evolution of Chekhov's art, emphasizing the thematic and structural aspects of Chekhov's works. Attention paid to methods of characterization, use of detail, narrative technique, and the roles into which he casts his audience. Usually offered every second year.  
Ms. Miller

**RECS 135a From Pushkin to Chekhov: The Short Story in Russia**

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to do readings either in English translation or in Russian.*

Focuses on the great tradition of the short story in Russia. This genre has always invited stylistic and narrative experimentation, as well as being a vehicle for the striking, if brief, expression of complex social, religious, and philosophical themes. Usually offered every second year.  
Ms. Miller

**RECS 137a Women in Russian Literature**

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to do readings either in English translation or in Russian.*

Examines questions of female representation and identity and of female authorship. Readings include portrayals of women by men and women authors. Usually offered every second year.  
Staff

**RECS 146a Dostoevsky: Gods and Monsters**

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to do readings either in English translation or in Russian.*

A comprehensive survey of Dostoevsky's life and works, with special emphasis on the major novels. Usually offered every second year.  
Ms. Miller

**RECS 147b Tolstoy: Freedom, Chance, and Necessity**

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to do readings either in English translation or in Russian.*

Studies the major short stories and novels of Leo Tolstoy against the backdrop of nineteenth-century history and with reference to twentieth-century critical theory. Usually offered every second year.  
Ms. Miller

**RECS 148a Russian Drama: Text and Performance**

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to do readings either in English translation or in Russian.*

Examines the rich tradition of Russian drama and theater. Readings include masterpieces of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including those by Chekhov, Pushkin, Gogol, Ostrovsky, Mayakovsky, Erdman, and others. Usually offered every second year.  
Mr. Powelstock

**RECS 149b The Rise and Fall of Russian Modernism: Cultural and Political Revolutions, 1900–1934**

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to do readings either in English translation or in Russian.*

An interdisciplinary immersion in the period, emphasizing the connections between historical and artistic trends and employing prominent theories of culture. Focuses on major figures, works, and events in film, literature, the performing and visual arts, and political, philosophical, and religious thought. Usually offered every second year.  
Mr. Powelstock

**RUS 150b Advanced Russian Language through Literature**

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*Prerequisite: RUS 40b or permission of the instructor. Taught in Russian.*

A seminar designed to give intermediate to advanced students of Russian the linguistic and critical skills to analyze literature in Russian. Poetry and short works of fiction are included. Usually offered every second year.  
Ms. Dubinina

**RUS 153a Russian Poetry in Russian: Undergraduate Seminar**

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*Prerequisite: RUS 105a or 106b or 150b, or permission of the instructor. Taught in Russian.*

An undergraduate seminar focusing on the advanced study of Russian poetry in the original Russian and development of Russian oral and written language skills needed to analyze and discuss poetry. Includes a selection of the very best Russian poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Usually offered every second year.  
Mr. Powelstock

**RECS 154a The Art of Vladimir Nabokov**

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*Open to all students. Conducted in English. Students may choose to read the Russian novels either in English translation or in Russian.*

A concentrated study of Vladimir Nabokov, the most noted Russian author living in emigration and one of the most influential novelists of the twentieth century. Focuses on the major Russian- and English-language novels. Usually offered every second year.  
Mr. Powelstock

**Cross-Listed Courses****ECS 100a**

European Cultural Studies Proseminar: Modernism

**ECS 100b**

European Cultural Studies Proseminar: Making of European Modernity

**FA 118b**

Drawing upon Literature

**COML 160a**

Contemporary East European Literature

**COML 185a**

Dickens and Dostoevsky

**HUM 125a**

Topics in the Humanities