

RUSSIAN (BRYN MAWR)

Department Website:

<https://www.brynmawr.edu/russian>

Students may complete a major or minor in Russian.

The Russian major is a multidisciplinary program designed to provide students with a broad understanding of Russian culture and the Russophone world. The major places a strong emphasis on the development of functional proficiency in the Russian language. With coursework and a major path that allows for individualization, the Russian Department encourages students to explore the topics that are of greatest interest to them and to uncover new ones that lead to unexpected opportunities and personal growth.

Sourced from the Bryn Mawr College website:
<https://www.brynmawr.edu/inside/academic-information/departments-programs/russian/program-requirements-opportunities>

Major Requirements

A total of 10 courses is required to complete the major, which must include:

- RUSS B102 (not required if the student is placed into a 200 or 300-level Russian language course, in which case one additional RUSS language course will help fulfill the ten-course minimum);
- at least two language or content courses, taught in Russian at the 200 level (can include third-year Russian, RUSS201/202);
- at least three content courses taught in Russian at the 300 level, including either RUSS398, Senior Essay, or RUSS400, Senior Essay;
- at least two area studies courses that are offered in history, literature, film, culture, taught in English;
- two additional RUSS courses, taught in Russian or English.

Russian majors have the option of fulfilling the College's writing requirement through Writing Attentive (WA) courses either through upper-level Russian language courses, where the focus is on writing in Russian, or through 200-level courses on Russian literature (in English), culture or film, where the focus is on writing in English. Majors also have the option of completing one WA course in Russian and one WA course in English.

Majors are encouraged to pursue advanced language study in a Russian-speaking country in summer, semester, or year-long academic programs. Majors

may consider attending an approved intensive summer program offered domestically.

As part of the requirement for RUSS398 or RUSS400, all Russian majors take a Russian language exam.

Requirements for Honors

All Russian majors are considered for departmental honors at the end of their senior year. The awarding of honors is based on a student's overall academic record, work done in the major, and intellectual engagement with Russian language and culture.

The departmental faculty awards honors based on superior performance in two areas: coursework in major-related courses (including language classes), and the senior thesis. The faculty requires a minimum 3.7 average in major-related coursework to consider a student for honors.

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Minor Requirements

Students wishing to minor in Russian must complete six units at the 100 level or above, two of which must be in the Russian language.

Faculty at Bryn Mawr

Timothy Harte

Professor of Russian

Brian Kilgour

Visiting Instructor of The Emily Balch Seminars

Marina Rojavin

Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian

Jane Shaw

Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian

Jose Vergara

Associate Professor and Chair of Russian on the Myra T. Cooley Lectureship in Russian Studies

Irina Walsh

Senior Lecturer in Russian

Affiliated Faculty

Linda Gerstein

Professor of History; Chair of Independent College Programs; Chair of Russian (BMC)

Courses at Bryn Mawr

RUSS B001 ELEMENTARY RUSSIAN INTENSIVE (1.5 Credits)

Jane Shaw, Marina Rojavin

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts)
Study of basic grammar and syntax. Fundamental skills in speaking, reading, writing, and oral comprehension are developed. Seven hours a week including conversation sections and language laboratory work. Approach: Course does not meet an Approach; Haverford: A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts) (A), Humanities (HU) Enrollment Cap: 18; If the course exceeds the enrollment cap the following criteria will be used for the lottery: Freshman; Sophomore; Junior; Senior. Two additional hours of Conversation (per week) will be set according to students' schedules.

(Offered: Fall 2025)

RUSS B002 ELEMENTARY RUSSIAN INTENSIVE (1.5 Credits)

Jane Shaw, Marina Rojavin

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts)
Study of basic grammar and syntax. Fundamental skills in speaking, reading, writing, and oral comprehension are developed. Seven hours a week including conversation sections and language laboratory work. Approach: Course does not meet an Approach; Haverford: A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts) (A), Humanities (HU) Enrollment Cap: 18; If the course exceeds the enrollment cap the following criteria will be used for the lottery: Freshman; Sophomore; Junior; Senior. Two additional hours of Conversation (per week) will be set according to students' schedules.

(Offered: Spring 2026)

RUSS B101 INTERMEDIATE RUSSIAN (1.0 Credit)

Irina Walsh

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts)
Continuing development of fundamental skills with emphasis on vocabulary expansion in speaking and writing. Readings in Russian classics and contemporary works. Five hours a week

(Offered: Fall 2025)

RUSS B102 INTERMEDIATE RUSSIAN (1.0 Credit)

Irina Walsh

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts)
Continuing development of fundamental skills with emphasis on vocabulary expansion in speaking and writing. Readings in Russian classics and contemporary works. Five hours a week.
(Offered: Spring 2026)

RUSS B201 ADVANCED RUSSIAN (1.0 Credit)

Irina Walsh

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts)
Intensive practice in speaking and writing skills using a variety of modern texts and contemporary films and television. Emphasis on self-expression and a deeper understanding of grammar and syntax. Five hours a week.

(Offered: Fall 2025)

RUSS B202 ADVANCED RUSSIAN (1.0 Credit)

Irina Walsh

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts)
Intensive practice in speaking and writing skills using a variety of modern texts and contemporary films and television. Emphasis on self-expression and a deeper understanding of grammar and syntax. Five hours a week.

(Offered: Spring 2026)

RUSS B209 RUSSIA AND THE EAST (1.0 Credit)

Brian Kilgour

“We are Asians!,” famously declared the Russian poet Aleksandr Blok in 1918. Russian culture has long celebrated the nation’s close ties to the east as well as its ancient eastern heritage. From the time of Genghis Khan and the Mongolian yoke’s invasion of Kievan Rus’ in the 13th century to the present day and Vladimir Putin’s ongoing geopolitical pivot to the east, Russia has grappled with its eastern roots, its vast eastern expanse, and Sino-Russian relations. This course will explore a wide variety of cultural manifestations of Russia’s eastern orientation: Russian philosophy at the turn into the 20th century that emphasized Russia’s eastern, mystical focus; Russian symbolist poetry and prose that amplified Russia’s ties to the East; silent cinema of the 1920s that linked revolution to the East; non-fiction accounts of penal colonies and work camps scattered throughout Siberia (with particular emphasis on the work of Chekhov, Solzhenitsyn, Shalamov); late Soviet fiction probing life in rural Siberia; and contemporary Russian fiction that revisits Russia’s eastern mysticism. Exploring Russia’s ties to the East from a variety of historical, artistic, and social perspectives, this course aims to explore Russian culture’s Eurasian essence.

RUSS B212 RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION (1.0 Credit)*Brian Kilgour***Division:** Humanities

This is a topics course. Topics vary. All readings, lectures, and discussions in English.

RUSS B216 THE SOVIET THAW AND ITS CULTURE (1.0 Credit)*Irina Walsh*

Named by famed Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg, the Thaw (Ottepel) was a brief period in Soviet history spanning the late 1950s and early 1960s, when social, political and cultural changes led to more openness and freedom in Soviet society. This course focuses on this brief, yet consequential time in Soviet history. The main text for the course will be the 2013 TV series *The Thaw* (dir. Valery Todorovsky). As we watch this show, we will discuss its major conflicts and the characters' lives, and we will look into all the allusions to various Soviet texts and realia. As such, we will explore Stalin's repressions, de-Stalinization, the rehabilitation of Stalin's political prisoners, Gagarin's orbiting of the Earth, the Cold War, Khrushchev's policies during the Thaw, artistic movements, government censorship, and fashion. Through articles, literary and non-literary texts, documentaries and feature films, in addition to the TV series, participants in this course will expand their understanding of this time period in Soviet history and Russian culture in general. Participants will also compare and contrast culturally-accepted norms, behaviors, and taboos in Soviet Russia to those characteristic of contemporary Russian society. All texts and class interaction will be in Russian.

RUSS B220 CHORNOBYL (1.0 Credit)*Jose Vergara*

This course introduces students to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, its consequences, and its representations across a range of cultures and media through a comparative lens and as a global phenomenon. Culture meets ecology, science, history, and politics. Students will contribute to a digital exhibition and physical installation. Taught in translation. No knowledge of Russian required.

RUSS B226 PERESTROIKA AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION (1.0 Credit)*Irina Walsh*

RUSS226 examines the last decade of the Soviet Union and its political, social, and cultural issues. You will learn about Brezhnev's last years in the Politburo, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the summer 1980 Olympics in Moscow. Perestroika, or "rebuilding," which began with Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power in 1985, shifted every aspect of living in the Soviet Union, including the economic

situation, censorship, and ethnic tensions in the Soviet republics, and eventually led to the collapse of the Soviet Empire. Through prominent films and writing of the 1980s, you will gain an understanding of the Soviet system in its final stage. All texts and class interaction will be in Russian. Prerequisite: RUSS B201 or permission of instructor.

RUSS B232 COAL, OIL, NUCLEAR: NARRATIVE AFTERLIVES (1.0 Credit)*Jose Vergara*

Coal. Oil. Nuclear energy. These items give shape to our everyday lives in countless ways. They impact our health, our politics, and our very survival on earth.. Nevertheless, because these resources permeate nearly every aspect of our existence, the human mind can struggle to comprehend them in their totality. In this course, we'll explore texts that engage with our environment to help us bring humans' relationship to these materials into focus. Scientific, historical, and economic studies tend to focus on their scale and widespread impact. Reading stories, watching

RUSS B233 EXPERIMENTAL LITERATURE; OR, WEIRD STUFF (1.0 Credit)*Jose Vergara*

Stuck in a reading rut? Is the strange, the peculiar, the mind-shattering, the paradigm-shifting calling? Texts that imagine and generate changed perspectives, cultures, and lives? Reading a wide variety (multiple literatures, 20th- and 21st-centuries), we'll investigate—gravely and playfully—what experimenting with/in literature means as well as experimental literature's capacity in representing cultural margins. In particular, in which ways can experimental literature intersect with atypical attitudes and values, alternative lifestyles, and issues such as nature and land, Indigeneity, and gender? What makes the experimental enter the mainstream, and can they interact fruitfully? What happens at the very margins when writers use unusual techniques and styles? Let's get weird. (Catch the Oulipo constraint in here?) Note: Taught in English. No knowledge of Russian language/culture necessary. Open to all. (Offered: Spring 2026)

RUSS B235 THE SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF RUSSIAN (1.0 Credit)*Irina Walsh***Division:** Social Science**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World

An examination of the social factors that influence the language of Russian conversational speech, including contemporary Russian media (films, television, and the Internet). Basic social strategies that structure a conversation are studied, as well

as the implications of gender and education on the form and style of discourse. Prerequisite: RUSS B201, RUSS 102 also required if taken concurrently with RUSS 201.

(Offered: Fall 2025)

RUSS B237 CRIME OR PUNISHMENT: RUSSIAN NARRATIVES OF INCARCERATION (1.0 Credit)

Jose Vergara

This course explores Russian narratives of incarceration, punishment, and captivity from the 17th century to the present day and considers topics such as social justice, violence and its artistic representations, totalitarianism, witness-bearing, and the possibility of transcendence in suffering. Taught in English. No knowledge of Russian language/culture necessary. Open to all.

(Offered: Fall 2025)

RUSS B240 RUSSIAN THROUGH ART (1.0 Credit)

Irina Walsh

Course examines visual art in the Russian Empire of the 19th and early 20th century, in the Soviet Union, and in the Post-Soviet space. You will learn about major Russian-speaking painters and their work, as well as about important museums, collectors, and exhibits, both in and outside of Russia. You will learn about *peredvizhniki*, *Mir iskusstva*, avantgarde artists, socialist realism in art, *Sots-Art*, the *Lianozovskaya* group, and other important movements in the history of art in the last two hundred years. All texts and class interaction will be in Russian.

RUSS B252 LOVE, DEATH, JUSTICE, & RUSSIAN LITERATURE (1.0 Credit)

Jose Vergara

Division: Humanities

This Inside-Out course will be conducted inside a correctional institution and will bring inside (SCI Chester) and outside students (BMC) into dialogue. Can Russian novels and short stories help us understand our lives? We'll closely read and analyze works by several Russian authors and discuss how they each treat themes including life, death, family, love, the individual and society, generational conflicts, crime and punishment, and power dynamics. Finally, our broad goal will be to explore how these texts speak to contemporary issues, our lives, and eternal problems that all of humanity faces—what Russians call the “accursed questions.”

(Offered: Spring 2026)

RUSS B265 QUEER RUSSIAS (1.0 Credit)

Jose Vergara

This course presents an alternative vision of Russia's cultural legacy with a focus on queer writing, film, and art from the early nineteenth century to the present day. We consider key moments in this history by examining texts that explore what it has meant to be queer in Russia under different regimes with various levels of tolerance, while centering their power as works of protest art, personal expression, and creative exploration and experimentation.

Topics includes: queer masculinities and femininities, reproductive rights, pop and Internet cultures, queer joy, homophobia and protest, trans rights, queerness and disability, marriage, among others. Taught in English. No knowledge of Russian language/culture necessary. Open to all.

(Offered: Fall 2025)

RUSS B271 CHEKHOV: HIS SHORT STORIES AND PLAYS IN TRANSLATION (1.0 Credit)

Timothy Harte

Division: Humanities

A study of the themes, structure and style of Chekhov's major short stories and plays. The course will also explore the significance of Chekhov's prose and drama in the English-speaking world, where this masterful Russian writer is the most staged playwright after Shakespeare. All readings and lectures in English.

RUSS B316 RUSSIAN AND SOVIET SHORT STORY (1.0 Credit)

Marina Rojavin

This new Russian language course will explore the nature and evolution of the Russian short story from the beginning of the 19th century through the beginning of the 21st century. We will begin with the stories of Pushkin and Gogol and continue with Garshin who proved instrumental in developing the genre to its modern form. Students will then read stories by Chekhov, Bunin, Nabokov, Babel, Shukshin, Tolstaya, Pelevin — writers with distinguished voices who introduced a variety of groundbreaking themes, characters, and plots and whose art reveals the possibilities of the genre. All the readings and discussion will be in Russian.

RUSS B317 POWER AND THE POET: RESISTANCE AND OTHERNESS IN RUSSIAN, SOV (1.0 Credit)

Marina Rojavin

In Imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russia, literature and, later, cinema have served to augment voices calling for freedom and non-conformism in opposition to censorship and oppression. Vis-à-vis these calls for freedom, the concept of the Other has always occupied a prominent space in the Russian collective mindset, as well as in literature and art. Evoking the broad image of the writer, artist, philosopher,

and thinker in Russian culture and embodying Otherness, the poet has often challenged Russian society to confront difficult issues. This course will examine how the so-called poet's Otherness has been imagined and depicted in Russian prose and poetry, cinema and media, and in the culture as a whole. By questioning underlying assumptions in Russian culture, students will explore the processes of constructing and representing the Other in terms of ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and dissidence. Conducted in Russian
(Offered: Spring 2026)

RUSS B319 ADVANCED RUSSIAN THROUGH CURRENT EVENTS (0.5 Credit)

Irina Walsh

This course offers an exploration of contemporary social, political, ecological, and cultural issues in Russia and on the territories of former Soviet Republics. By working with authentic materials, including articles and video clips, students will solidify Advanced-level reading, listening, writing and speaking skills (ACTFL 2012). All texts and class interactions will be in Russian.

RUSS B365 RUSSIAN AND SOVIET FILM CULTURE (1.0 Credit)

Marina Rojavin

Division: Humanities

This seminar explores the cultural and theoretical trends that have shaped Russian and Soviet cinema from the silent era to the present day. The focus will be on Russia's films and film theory, with discussion of the aesthetic, ideological, and historical issues underscoring Russia's cinematic culture. Taught in Russian. No previous study of cinema required, although RUSS 201 or the equivalent is required.

RUSS B380 SEMINAR IN RUSSIAN STUDIES (1.0 Credit)

Irina Walsh

Division: Humanities

An examination of a focused topic in Russian literature such as a particular author, genre, theme, or decade. Introduces students to close reading and detailed critical analysis of Russian literature in the original language. Readings in Russian. Some discussions and lectures in Russian. Prerequisites: RUSS 102 and one 200-level Russian literature course.

RUSS B390 RUSSIAN FOR PRE-PROFESSIONALS I (1.0 Credit)

Marina Rojavin

Division: Humanities

This capstone to the overall language course sequence is designed to develop linguistic and cultural proficiency in Russian to the advanced level

or higher, preparing students to carry out academic study or research in Russian in a professional field. Suggested Preparation: study abroad in Russia for at least one summer, preferably one semester; and/or certified proficiency levels of 'advanced-low' or 'advanced-mid' in two skills, one of which must be oral proficiency.

(Offered: Fall 2025)

RUSS B391 RUSSIAN FOR PRE-PROFESSIONALS II (1.0 Credit)

Marina Rojavin

Division: Humanities

Second part of year long capstone language sequence designed to develop linguistic and cultural proficiency to the "advanced level," preparing students to carry out advanced academic study or research in Russian in a professional field.

Prerequisite: RUSS 390 or equivalent.

(Offered: Spring 2026)

RUSS B399 SENIOR CONFERENCE (1.0 Credit)

Irina Walsh, Linda Gerstein, Marina Rojavin

Division: Humanities

Exploration of an interdisciplinary topic in Russian culture. Topic varies from year to year. Requirements may include short papers, oral presentations, and examinations.

RUSS B400 SENIOR ESSAY (1.0 Credit)

Jane Shaw

(Offered: Spring 2026)

RUSS B403 SUPERVISED WORK (1.0 Credit)

Irina Walsh, Marina Rojavin

Division: Humanities

(Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2026)

Courses at Haverford

RUSS H001 ELEMENTARY RUSSIAN INTENSIVE (1.5 Credits)

Jane Shaw, Marina Rojavin

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts)
Study of basic grammar and syntax. Fundamental skills in speaking, reading, writing, and oral comprehension are developed. Seven hours a week including conversation sections and language laboratory work.

RUSS H002 ELEMENTARY RUSSIAN INTENSIVE (1.5 Credits)

Jane Shaw, Marina Rojavin

Division: Humanities

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts)
Study of basic grammar and syntax. Fundamental skills in speaking, reading, writing, and oral

comprehension are developed. Eight hours a week including conversation sections and language laboratory work.

RUSS H244 19TH C. RUSSIA: LITERATURE IN HISTORY (1.0 Credit)

Linda Gerstein

Division: Social Science

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts); B: Analysis of the Social World

Topics considered include the culture of serfdom, Westernization, reforms, modernization, national identities, and Revolution. Crosslisted: History, Russian

(Offered: Fall 2025)

RUSS H245 RUSSIA IN THE 20TH CENTURY (1.0 Credit)

Linda Gerstein

Division: Humanities

Continuity and change in Russian and Soviet society since the 1890s. Major topics: the revolutionary period, the cultural ferment of the 1920s, Stalinism, the Thaw, the culture of dissent, and the collapse of the system.

RUSS H356 EUROPEAN MODERNISM 1913-1937 (1.0 Credit)

Linda Gerstein

Division: Social Science

Domain(s): A: Meaning, Interpretation (Texts); B: Analysis of the Social World

(Offered: Fall 2025)