SLAVIC LANGUAGES & LITERATURES (SLAVIC)

SLAVIC 103. The Putin Phenomenon: Culture and Politics in Recent Russian History. 3-5 Units.
A man who likes to ride horses shirtless. An autocrat who has shaped contemporary Russia and won’t let go of the reins. A conniver who interferes in international democratic processes toward his own nefarious ends. More than a politician or an individual, “Putin” has become a catch-all that stands in for Russia as a whole. In this course, we’ll attempt to separate the man from the myth and to understand the historical and cultural context behind Putin’s policies. In the process, we will strive better to grasp contemporary Russian society as a complex and culturally rich environment, not just an oppressed land under the thumb of one man. In the course of our analysis, we will examine literary and cultural artifacts and expressive works that engage with political, social, and universal human problems in a Russian and post-Soviet context, interpreting and critiquing those cultural objects with an eye to aesthetic methods and qualities and also how they reflect historical and cultural elements of Russia over a 25-year period. Cultural products to be addressed include literature and film (and one graphic novel) from the Perestroika period through the present day. We will also read President Putin’s autobiography, First Person, and several of his speeches, using techniques of literary analysis to parse the particular story about Russia that he aims to convey to Russians. By examining and exploring a range of cultural objects from Russia’s recent history, we seek to understand the forces that contributed to social and political change over those years, the effect those changes had on ordinary (and extraordinary) Russians, and how those effects take on meaningful aesthetic form through creative expression.
Same as: COMPLIT 103

SLAVIC 113. LGBTQ in Russia: A Legal History. 3-5 Units.
Russian politicians who support the country’s law against so-called “gay propaganda” have repeatedly defended the restriction of LGBTQ rights. They claim that sexual minorities are antonymous to Russian “traditional values”, and some have even suggested that homosexuality should be re-criminalized altogether. This course explores the place of sexual minorities within Russian “tradition” by tracing laws regulating sex from the medieval period to the present day.
Same as: REES 214, SLAVIC 213

SLAVIC 118N. Other People’s Words: Folklore and Literature. 4 Units.
What happens when you collect and use other people’s words? This class considers folklore and literature based on it, focusing on the theme of objects that come to life and threaten their makers or owners (including Russian fairy tales and Nikolai Gogol’s stories, the Golem legend and Michael Chabon’s Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay, and Ovid’s and Shaw’s Pygmalion). We read essays by Jacob Grimm, Roman Jakobson, and others, to understand what folklore can mean and how the oral and the written can interact. Students collect living folklore from a group of their choosing. This course fulfills the second-level Writing and Rhetoric Requirement (Write-2) and emphasizes oral and multimedia presentation. Prerequisite: PWR 1.

SLAVIC 121. Ukraine at a Crossroads. 1-5 Unit.
Literally meaning “borderland,” Ukraine has embodied in-betweenness in all possible ways. What is the mission of Ukraine in Europe and in Eurasia? How can Ukraine become an agent of democracy, stability, and unity? What does Ukraine’s case of multiple identities and loyalties offer to our understanding of the global crisis of national identity? In this course, we will consider the historical permeability of Ukraine’s territorial, cultural, and ethnic borders as an opportunity to explore the multiple dimensions of its relations with its neighbors. In addition to studying historical and literary, and cinematic texts, we discuss nationalism, global capitalism, memory politics, and propaganda in order to understand post-Euromaidan society. All required texts are in English. No knowledge of Ukrainian is required. NOTE: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units and a letter grade to be eligible for ways credit.
Same as: SLAVIC 221

SLAVIC 129. Russian Versification: History and Theory. 1-5 Unit.
A survey of metric forms, rhyming principles and stanzaic patterns in the Russian poetry of the 18th-21st centuries. Taught in Russian. Prerequisite: Two years of Russian. NOTE: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take SLAVIC 129 for a minimum of 3 Units and a Letter Grade.
Same as: SLAVIC 329

SLAVIC 145. Survey of Russian Literature: The Age of Experiment. 1-5 Unit.
This course discusses the transition from predominantly poetic to predominantly prosaic creativity in the Russian literature of the first half of the 19th century Russian literature and the birth of the great Russian novel. It covers three major Russian writers – Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov and Nikolai Gogol – and examines the changes in the Russian literary scene affected by their work. An emphasis is placed on close reading of literary texts and analysis of literary techniques employed in them. Taught in English. NOTE: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take SLAVIC 145 for a minimum of 3 Units and a Letter Grade.
Same as: SLAVIC 345

SLAVIC 146. The Great Russian Novel: Tolsoty and Dostoevsky. 1-5 Unit.
In this seminar, we will study the development of the 19th-century Russian novel through the close reading and broad cultural examination of three masterpieces: Ivan Goncharov’s <i>Obomlov</i> (1859), Fyodor Dostoevsky’s <i>Crime and Punishment</i> (1866), and Leo Tolstoy’s <i>Anna Karenina</i> (1877). Through the analysis of the novels and their context, we will define the aesthetic contours of the Russian realist novel. We will pay special attention to the questions of genre, narration, discourse, medium, and intermediarity. Note: To be eligible for WAYS/WIM credit, you must take SLAVIC 146 for a minimum of 3 Units and a Letter Grade.
Same as: SLAVIC 346

SLAVIC 147. Modern Russian Literature and Culture: The Age of War and Revolution. 1-5 Unit.
The Age of Revolution: Readings in Russian Modernist Prose of the 1920-30s: What makes Russian modernist prose special? Or is there anything special about Russian modernist prose? This course aims to answer these questions through close readings of works by Babel, Mandelstam, Zoschchenko, Platonov, Olesha and Bulgakov. Aesthetic issues such as hero, plot, and narrative devices will be addressed with the aid of contemporaneous literary theory (Shklovsky, Tynianov, Eikhenbaum, Bakhtin). Novels and theory will be read in English. NOTE: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units and a letter grade to be eligible for Ways credit.
Same as: SLAVIC 347
SLAVIC 15N. "My Life Had Stood - A Loaded Gun": Dostoevsky, Dickinson, and the Question of Freedom... 3-5 Units.

As far apart as Dickinson and Dostoevsky are in terms of national contexts, gendered possibilities of life, and their choice of minimalist or maximalist forms, their experiences of constriction and freedom bore significant similarities. Dostoevsky penned his vow to love life on the day that he was manacled as a political prisoner and marched off to thirteen years of forced labor and exile in Siberia. He exploded back on the Petersburg literary scene in the early 1860’s with three block-busters, Notes from the Underground, Memoirs from the House of the Dead, and Crime and Punishment, establishing himself forever as Russia’s most controversial explorer of the violence of human thought. In these same years Emily Dickinson was sequestering herself in her family’s Amherst house for the remainder of her life, yet she announced her rebel’s credo in these enigmatic lines: My Life Had Stood, a Loaded Gun - until the Day... In this class we will explore the idea that Emily Dickinson and Fyodor Dostoevsky may be seen as original shifters of modern literary art and philosophy. We will unpack the agonizing relationship of freedom, action, and language that both authors explore. Classes will be organized around presentations, debates in pairs, the exploration of "scandalous scenes," and finally a symposium in which students will present and contribute to each other's paper projects. There are no prerequisites for this course apart from a desire to read poems and novels closely and in tandem.

SLAVIC 165. City Myth: Soviet and Post-Soviet Sites of Memory. 1-5 Unit.

How does memory work in Soviet and post-Soviet space? How do cities create and transform memory? This course uncovers the layers of cultural history in four Russian and Ukrainian cities: Kyiv, Odesa, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. All four cities were imagined as utopian projects and all underwent transformation and destruction in the 20th century; their earlier layers exist only in literary texts and films. Readings combine literary and critical theory (Benjamin, Foucault, Barthes, Lotman) with fiction and films (Akhmatova, Andrukhovich, Babel, Bitov, Bulgakov, Bunin, Paradzhyan, Sokurov, Trifonov, Zhabotinsky, Vertov, Zeldovich) that display the ongoing collective memory work on the Soviet legacy. Students will create cartographic projects with Google Maps, Earth and Tour Builder, and HyperCities that visualize the urban palimpsest of cities undergoing major transformations.

Same as: SLAVIC 365

SLAVIC 169. Folklore Theory and Slavic Folklore. 1-3 Unit.

Why do educated elites care about popular or folk culture, and how do they use it? An intellectual history of two centuries of folklore theory, with examples drawn from Eastern European (Slavic and Jewish) lore; students collect other folklore themselves and analyze it. Separate section for Russian readers.

Same as: SLAVIC 369

SLAVIC 179. Literature from Medieval Rus’ and Early Modern Russia. 1-5 Unit.

This course traces the history of Russian literature before the eighteenth century. It is divided into two sections. The first section examines literature from Rus’ (up to the fourteenth century), the medieval conglomerate to which Belarus, Russia and Ukraine all trace their cultural heritage. The second section examines old Russian literature specifically, from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. We pay close attention to the development of literary genres, moral/religious and aesthetic features and their relationship, and the beginnings of Russian belles lettres. Our approach to the texts will be two-fold. On the one hand, we will spend some time situating the sources within their historical contexts. On the other hand, we will explore the interpretive possibilities of premodern literature using formal analysis and critical theory. Knowledge of an East Slavic language is required.

Same as: SLAVIC 379

SLAVIC 181. Philosophy and Literature. 3-5 Units.

What, if anything, does reading literature do for our lives? What can literature offer that other forms of writing cannot? Can fictions teach us anything? Can they make people more moral? Why do we take pleasure in tragic stories? This course introduces students to major problems at the intersection of philosophy and literature. It addresses key questions about the value of literature, philosophical puzzles about the nature of fiction and literary language, and ways that philosophy and literature interact. Readings span literature, film, and philosophical theories of art. Authors may include Sophocles, Dickinson, Toni Morrison, Proust, Woolf, Walon, Nietzsche, and Sartre. Students master close reading techniques and philosophical analysis, and write papers combining the two. This is the required gateway course for the Philosophy and Literature major tracks. Majors should register in their home department.

Same as: CLASSICS 42, COMPLIT 181, ENGLISH 81, FRENCH 181, GERMAN 181, ITALIAN 181, PHIL 81

SLAVIC 185. Cinemato-graph. 1-5 Unit.

The term cinematography, which literally means "inscribing motion," tends to lose the "graphic" part in modern use. However, several influential film-makers not only practiced the art of "inscribing motion" but also wrote texts discussing the aesthetic premises of cinematographic art. This course explores theories of cinema as propagated by the following film-makers: Vertov, Eisenstein, Godard, Bresson, Antonioni, Pasolini, Tarkovsky, Greenaway, and Lynch. Selected key texts will be supplemented by screenings of classic films, indicative of each director's work. NOTE: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units to be eligible for Ways credit.

Same as: FILMSTUD 131, FILMSTUD 331, SLAVIC 285

SLAVIC 187. Russian Poetry of the 18th and 19th Centuries. 1-5 Unit.

A survey of Russian poetry from Lomonosov to Vladimir Solov'ev. Close reading of lyrical poems. Prerequisite: 3rd Year Russian Language.

Same as: SLAVIC 387

SLAVIC 199. Individual Work for Undergraduates. 1-5 Unit.

Open to Russian majors or students working on special projects. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

SLAVIC 213. LGBTQ in Russia: A Legal History. 3-5 Units.

Russian politicians who support the country’s law against so-called “gay propaganda” have repeatedly defended the restriction of LGBTQ rights. They claim that sexual minorities are antonymous to Russian “traditional values”, and some have even suggested that homosexuality should be re-criminalized altogether. This course explores the place of sexual minorities within Russian “tradition” by tracing laws regulating sex from the medieval period to the present day.

Same as: REES 214, SLAVIC 113

SLAVIC 221. Ukraine at a Crossroads. 1-5 Unit.

Literally meaning “borderland,” Ukraine has embodied in-betweenness in all possible ways. What is the mission of Ukraine in Europe and in Eurasia? How can Ukraine become an agent of democracy, stability, and unity? What does Ukraine’s case of multiple identities and loyalties offer to our understanding of the global crisis of national identity? In this course, we will consider the historical permeability of Ukraine’s territorial, cultural, and ethnic borders as an opportunity to explore the multiple dimensions of its relations with its neighbors. In addition to studying historical and literary, and cinematic texts, we discuss nationalism, global capitalism, memory politics, and propaganda in order to understand post-Euromaidan society. All required texts are in English. No knowledge of Ukrainian is required. NOTE: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units and a letter grade to be eligible for Ways credit.

Same as: SLAVIC 121
SLAVIC 223. Russian Formalism. 1-5 Unit.
By reading key texts written by Russian Formalists, who comprised one of the foundational movements of literary theory, we will trace how these thinkers of art and literature problematized the role and importance of form in their writing. We will investigate their systemic views of narrative, artistic evolution, fimmic image and the function of ideology in arts. Texts will be read in English.
Same as: DCLL 240

SLAVIC 224. The Russian Postmodern Text. 1-5 Unit.
What is the place of postmodernism in Russia? The course aims to answer the question by engaging with theories of postmodernity (Baudrillard, Barthes, Derrida) and through close reading of several gems of Russian postmodern literature and art: Sasha Sokolov's "School for Fools" and "Palisandria," Vladimir Sorokin's "Norma" and "Blue Lard," and Dmitrii Prigov's selected poems. Texts read in Russian.

SLAVIC 228. Russian Nationalism: Literature and Ideas. 3-5 Units.
Russia is huge and linguistically and religiously diverse. Yet the ideology of nationalism -- the idea that culturally unified groups should rule their own territories -- took root in Russia in the early 19th century and is powerful today. What made this happen? Political thinkers, writers, and other artists have argued for the superiority of the Russian nation. Meanwhile, the tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet governments have worked to reconcile the ideology of nationalism with the realities of the administration of a diverse state. This course examines the roots of nationalism itself and the paradox of Russian nationalism, looking at literary and political writers including Dostoevsky, Stalin, and Solzhenitsyn.
Same as: REES 328, SLAVIC 228

SLAVIC 251. Dostoevsky: Narrative Performance and Literary Theory. 3-5 Units.
In-depth engagement with a range of Dostoevsky's genres: early works (epistolary novella Poor Folk and experimental Double), major novels (Crime and Punishment, The Idiot), less-read shorter works ("A Faint Heart," "Bobok," and "The Meek One"), and genre-bending House of the Dead and Diary of a Writer. Course applies recent theory of autobiography, performance, repetition and narrative gaps, to Dostoevsky's transformations of genre, philosophical and dramatic discourse, and narrative performance. Slavic students read primary texts in Russian, other participants in translation. Course conducted in English. For graduate students; undergraduates with advanced linguistic and critical competence may enroll with consent of instructor.
Same as: COMPLIT 219

SLAVIC 285. Cinematography. 1-5 Unit.
The term cinematography, which literally means "inscribing motion," tends to lose the "graphic" part in modern use. However, several influential film-makers not only practiced the art of "inscribing motion" but also wrote texts discussing the aesthetic premises of cinematographic art. This course explores theories of cinema as propagated by the following film-makers: Vertov, Eisenstein, Godard, Bresson, Antonioni, Pasolini, Tarkovsky, Greenaway, and Lynch. Selected key texts will be supplemented by screenings of classic films, indicative of each director's work. NOTE: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units to be eligible for Ways credit.
Same as: FILMSTUD 131, FILMSTUD 331, SLAVIC 185

SLAVIC 300B. Research Tools and Professionalization Workshop. 1 Unit.
This course introduces graduate students in Slavic Studies to library, archival, and web resources for research, grant opportunities, publication strategies, and professional timelines. Open to PhD students in the Slavic Department and other departments and to MA students in CREEES. NOTE: Those wishing to enroll, please contact Prof. Safran to obtain the course's meeting time and location.

SLAVIC 311. Introduction to Old Church Slavic. 2-4 Units.
The first written language of the Slavic people. Grammar. Primarily a skills course, with attention to the historical context of Old Church Slavic.

SLAVIC 327. Boris Pasternak and the Poetry of the Russian Avant-garde. 1-5 Unit.
An emphasis is made on close reading of the poetry of Boris Pasternak, Marina Tsvetaeva and Vladimir Mayakovsky. Taught in Russian. Prerequisite: 3rd Year Russian Language.

SLAVIC 328. Russian Nationalism: Literature and Ideas. 3-5 Units.
Russia is huge and linguistically and religiously diverse. Yet the ideology of nationalism -- the idea that culturally unified groups should rule their own territories -- took root in Russia in the early 19th century and is powerful today. What made this happen? Political thinkers, writers, and other artists have argued for the superiority of the Russian nation. Meanwhile, the tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet governments have worked to reconcile the ideology of nationalism with the realities of the administration of a diverse state. This course examines the roots of nationalism itself and the paradox of Russian nationalism, looking at literary and political writers including Dostoevsky, Stalin, and Solzhenitsyn.
Same as: REES 328, SLAVIC 228

SLAVIC 329. Russian Film: Symbolization and the History of Russia. 1-5 Unit.
A survey of metric forms, rhyming principles and stanzaic patterns in the Russian poetry of the 18th - 21st centuries. Taught in Russian.
Prerequisite: Two years of Russian. NOTE: To be eligible for Ways credit, you must take SLAVIC 129 for a minimum of 3 Units and a Letter Grade.
Same as: SLAVIC 129

SLAVIC 345. Survey of Russian Literature: The Age of Experiment. 1-5 Unit.
This course discusses the transition from predominantly poetic to predominantly prosaic creativity in the Russian literature of the first half of the 19th century Russian literature and the birth of the great Russian novel. It covers three major Russian writers -- Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov and Nikolai Gogol -- and examines the changes in the Russian literary scene affected by their work. An emphasis is placed on close reading of literary texts and analysis of literary techniques employed in them. Taught in English. NOTE: To be eligible for Ways credit, you must take SLAVIC 145 for a minimum of 3 Units and a Letter Grade.
Same as: SLAVIC 145

SLAVIC 346. The Great Russian Novel: Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. 1-5 Unit.
In this seminar, we will study the development of the 19th-century Russian novel through the close reading and broad cultural examination of three masterpieces: Ivan Goncharov's <i>Obomlovy</i> (1859), Fyodor Dostoevsky's <i>Crime and Punishment</i> (1866), and Leo Tolstoy's <i>Anna Karenina</i> (1877). Through the analysis of the novels and their context, we will define the aesthetic contours of the Russian realist novel. We will pay special attention to the questions of genre, narration, discourse, medium, and intermediality. Note: To be eligible for Ways credit, you must take SLAVIC 146 for a minimum of 3 Units and a Letter Grade.
Same as: SLAVIC 146

SLAVIC 347. Modern Russian Literature and Culture: The Age of War and Revolution. 1-5 Unit.
The Age of Revolution: Readings in Russian Modernist Prose of the 1920-30s: What makes Russian modernist prose special? Or is there anything special about Russian modernist prose? This course aims to answer these questions through close readings of works by Babel, Mandelstam, Zoshchenko, Platonov, Olesha and Bulgakov. Aesthetic issues such as hero, plot, and narrative devices will be addressed with the aid of contemporaneous literary theory (Shklovsky, Tynianov, Elkhonbaum, Bakhtin). Novels and theory will be read in English. NOTE: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units and a letter grade to be eligible for Ways credit.
Same as: SLAVIC 147
SLAVIC 36. Dangerous Ideas. 1 Unit.
Ideas matter. Concepts such as race, progress, and equality have inspired social movements, shaped political systems, and dramatically influenced the lives of individuals. Others, like gender identity, universal basic income, and historical memory play an important role in contemporary debates in the United States. All of these ideas are contested, and they have a real power to change lives, for better and for worse. In this one-unit class we will examine these dangerous ideas. Each week, a faculty member from a different department in the humanities and arts will explore a concept that has shaped human experience across time and space. Some weeks will have short reading assignments, but you are not required to purchase any materials.
Same as: ARTHIST 36, COMPLIT 36A, EALC 36, ENGLISH 71, ETHICSOC 36X, FRENCH 36, HISTORY 3D, MUSIC 36H, PHIL 36, POLISCI 70

SLAVIC 365. City Myth: Soviet and Post-Soviet Sites of Memory. 1-5 Unit.
How does memory work in Soviet and post-Soviet space? How do cities create and transform memory? This course uncovers the layers of cultural history in four Russian and Ukrainian cities: Kyiv, Odesa, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. All four cities were imagined as utopian projects and all underwent transformation and destruction in the 20th century; their earlier layers exist only in literary texts and films. Readings combine literary and critical theory (Benjamin, Foucault, Barthes, Lotman) with fiction and films (Akhamatova, Andrukhovych, Babel, Bitov, Bulgakov, Bunin, Paradzhanov, Sokurov, Trifonov, Zhabotinsky, Vertov, Zeldovich) that display the ongoing collective memory work on the Soviet legacy. Students will create cartographic projects with Google Maps, Earth and Tour Builder, and HyperCities that visualize the urban palimpsest of cities undergoing major transformations.
Same as: SLAVIC 165

SLAVIC 369. Folklore Theory and Slavic Folklore. 1-3 Unit.
Why do educated elites care about popular or folk culture, and how do they use it? An intellectual history of two centuries of folklore theory, with examples drawn from Eastern European (Slavic and Jewish) lore; students collect other folklore themselves and analyze it. Separate section for Russian readers.
Same as: SLAVIC 169

SLAVIC 370. Literature from Medieval Rus' and Early Modern Russia. 1-5 Unit.
This course traces the history of Russian literature before the eighteenth century. It is divided into two sections. The first section examines literature from Kyivan Rus’ (up to the thirteenth century), the medieval conglomerate to which Belarus, Russia and Ukraine all trace their cultural heritage. The second section examines old Russian literature specifically, from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. We pay close attention to the development of literary genres, moral/religious and aesthetic features and their relationship, and the beginnings of Russian belles lettres. Our approach to the texts will be two-fold. On the one hand, we will spend some time situating the sources within their historical contexts. On the other hand, we will explore the interpretive possibilities of premodern literature using formal analysis and critical theory. Knowledge of an East Slavic language is required.
Same as: SLAVIC 179

SLAVIC 379. Literature from Medieval Rus' and Early Modern Russia. 1-5 Unit.
A survey of Russian poetry from Lomonosov to Vladimirimir Sologov'ev. Close reading of lyrical poems. Prerequisite: 3rd Year Russian Language.
Same as: SLAVIC 187

SLAVIC 399. INDIVIDUAL WORK. 1-15 Unit.
Open to Russian majors or students working on special projects. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

SLAVIC 680. Curricular Practical Training. 1-3 Unit.
CPT course required for international students completing degree. Prerequisite: Slavic Languages and Literatures Ph.D. candidate.