The Department of Russian encourages students to explore Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia from all perspectives. Students often choose a double major in Russian and some other discipline, such as government or history; or they declare a major in Bowdoin’s interdisciplinary Eurasian and East European studies, which combines the study of Russian language and culture with courses in other areas with a Post-Soviet or Eurasian regional focus, including government, history, economics, anthropology, and women’s studies. At the same time, the department offers a full range of courses for those interested in a traditional language and literature major.

The curriculum includes a five-semester grammar sequence, several courses on Russian literature in the original language, and a variety of courses in English on literature, film, cultural history, and women’s studies. Recent literature-in-translation courses have included Soviet Worker Bees, Revolution, and Red Love in Russian Film; Dostoevsky or Tolstoy; and Central Asia through Film and Literature.

The Russian department’s language courses emphasize all the major linguistic skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Beginning language classes range in size from eight to fifteen students, while intermediate and advanced courses normally have from three to seven. Each language student is required to sign up for an extra conversation hour with the department’s teaching fellow, a native speaker of Russian. Students are also introduced to Russian-related resources on the Internet.

The department offers small seminars upon demand for students who have taken all language courses in the curriculum, but still wish to study some aspect of Russian culture or language. As many as seven students each year major in Russian at Bowdoin.

The Major

The Russian major consists of ten courses: beginning and intermediate Russian language (four courses), four intermediate or advanced courses in Russian, and two approved courses in either Russian literature in translation or Slavic civilization, or approved related courses in government, history, or economics (e.g., Government 2410, Post-Communist Russian Politics, and History 2108, History of Russia: 1825 to 1953). Courses taken outside the Russian department can be applied to the major with the approval of the department chair.

The Minor

The minor in Russian consists of seven courses, including the first two years of Russian language. Two courses for the minor may be taken outside the department with the permission of the department chair.

Eurasian and East European Studies

The interdisciplinary major in Eurasian and East European studies combines the study of the Russian language with related courses in anthropology, economics, German, government, history, music, Russian/Eurasian cultures and societies, Post-Soviet Block, and women’s studies. In the past, students studying Russian have had double majors in the above disciplines. This major combines these fields into a study of one common theme in order to provide a multidisciplinary introduction to the larger region, while allowing for an in-depth

Facilities and Resources

Bowdoin’s Language Media Center receives several hours of Russian television every day, not to mention programming from other former Soviet republics and East Central Europe. The center also houses part of the Russian department’s ever-growing library of Russian films on DVD and videocassette, resources on the alphabet and language, and online access to newspapers, radio, and magazines. The department has traditionally presented a dynamic extracurricular program to the community. From lectures by distinguished scholars, film screenings by Central Asian filmmakers, to performances by Russian poets and musicians, the department strives to put on events that give a unique, multifaceted perspective to one of the world’s most important regions. In recent years, it has sponsored important film festivals in which the community has not only screened crucial Russian films, but also met the actors, directors, and technicians who produced them. Other events have included poetry readings, performances by Russian musicians, roundtable discussions, and lectures. The department frequently organizes excursions to events at other colleges and universities throughout New England, as well as to the Russian communities in Maine, Boston, and New York.
Russian

Honors Projects

Recent projects completed by majors in the department include:

• The Skeleton and the Survivor: A Study of Moral Collapse and Psychological Experience in the Soviet GULAG
• The Mankurt and the Broken Sword: Nationalism and National Identity in Soviet and Post-Soviet Central Asian Literature
• Spiritual Freedom and Demonic Possession in F. M. Dostoevsky’s Post-Prison Works
• Trending Toward Chaos: The Soviet Nuclear Legacy
• Expressions of the Carnavalésque: Soviet Political and Social Anecdotes
• Health Care in the Former Soviet Union
• Nationalism and National Identity in Soviet and Post-Soviet Central Asian Literature

Independent Study and Departmental Honors

Through independent research projects, seniors can pursue a particular topic in Russian literature, culture, some other facet of Russian studies, or Eurasian/East European studies. This is an option intended for students who wish to work on honors projects or who have taken advantage of all the regular course offerings and wish to work more closely on a particular topic already studied. Independent study is not an alternative to regular course work. Application should be made to a member of the department prior to the semester in which the project is to be undertaken and must involve a specific proposal in an area in which the student can already demonstrate basic knowledge. In order to graduate with departmental honors, a student must complete a research project and defend an honors thesis in the spring. An honors project in either Russian or Eurasian and East European studies requires two semesters of independent study for a total of eleven courses in the major.

Faculty

Kristen Ghodsee, John S. Ostenweis Associate Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies, B.A. (California–Santa Cruz), M.A., Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), specializes in women’s and economic development issues, particularly in relation to post-socialist nations in Central and Eastern Europe.

Laura Henry, John F. and Dorothy H. Magee Associate Professor of Government, B.A. (Wellesley), M.A., Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), teaches Western and Eastern European politics, comparative politics, and social movements.

K. Page Herrlinger, associate professor of history, B.A. (Yale), M.A., Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), specializes in Russian history and teaches courses on modern European history, religious identity and revolutionary change in Russia, and Germany from 1918–1945.

Michael Klimov, lecturer in Russian, B.A., M.A. (Kyiv National Linguistic University, Ukraine), graduate advanced professional certificate in education (Shenandoah University), specializes in teaching foreign languages; academic interests include linguistics, second language acquisition, and Slavic folklore.

Kristina Anatolyevna Tolandi, visiting assistant professor of Russian, B.A., M.A. (Ohio State), M.A., Ph.D. (Northwestern), academic interests include Russian literature of the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, art history, autobiographical expression, digital media, the relationship between human beings and technology, theater, and Russian and European avant-garde.

Anna Williams, teaching fellow, comes from Southern Siberia.

After Bowdoin

Many of Bowdoin’s Russian majors and minors wind up working in Russia—for governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, private firms, or educational institutions; many others enter graduate programs in Slavic languages, government, history, law, and other fields at such institutions as Boston University, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Chicago. Other graduates embark on professional careers in the United States.