

Curriculum Committee Resolution 23/24- 12

Date: March 6, 2024

To: St. Olaf Faculty

From: Curriculum Committee

Re: Modifications to the Russian Area Studies Major and Discontinuation of the Russian Language Major

The Curriculum Committee will move that the faculty discontinue the Russian Language major and approve the following modifications to the Russian Area Studies major, including changing the name to “Russian Studies.”

Description of the modifications to the Russian Area Studies major:

- Change the name from Russian Area Studies to Russian Studies
- Increase the elective course options
- Remove the senior project requirement
- Add a requirement of a course numbered 303 or above to fulfill the Writing in the Major requirement
- Explicitly allow 3.0 credits to count from study abroad.
- No longer limit the number of advanced language courses that can count as elective courses toward the major.
- Explicitly state that students who place beyond the beginning level in Russian are required to take enough elective courses to fulfill the total 9.0 credit requirement for the major.

Current Russian area studies major

Russian language courses ¹		
RUSSN 111	Beginning Russian I	1
RUSSN 112	Beginning Russian II	1
RUSSN 231	Intermediate Russian I	1
RUSSN 232	Intermediate Russian II	1
Select five of the following political science, history, literature, or film courses approved for Russian language and area studies credit: ²		5
HIST 231	People and Power in Soviet Russia	
PSCI 282	Russian and Eurasian Politics	
RUSSN 250	Topics in Russian Literature (in English translation)	
RUSSN 251	Conversation and Composition	
RUSSN 254	Russian Culture and Civilization	
RUSSN 256	Theater in Russia: January Term Study Abroad	

RUSSN 261	The Golden Age of Russian Literature (in English Translation)	
RUSSN 262	20th-Century Russian Literature (in English translation)	
RUSSN 265	Introduction to Russian and Soviet Film (in English translation)	
RUSSN 371	Dostoevsky (in English translation)	
RUSSN 372	Topics in Contemporary Russian Society	
Senior project ³		
Total Credits		9
¹ A minimum of four semesters of Russian language is required, though more is encouraged.		
² For students who are not simultaneously working toward the Russian language major, two advanced Russian language courses (RUSSN 251 , RUSSN 254) may be counted toward the Russian area studies major.		
³ This may be taken for course credit as RUSSN 398 Independent Research. Guidelines are available from the department chair. The project is due on April 15.		

Proposed modifications

Russian language courses ¹		
RUSSN 111	Beginning Russian I	1
RUSSN 112	Beginning Russian II	1
RUSSN 231	Intermediate Russian I	1
RUSSN 232	Intermediate Russian II	1
Select five elective courses in any combination of language or culture: ^{2, 3}		5
HIST 121	The Making of Modern Russia	
HIST 231	People and Power in Soviet Russia	
HIST 320	Research Seminar: Modern European History (When topic is Russian History)	
PSCI 282	Russian and Eurasian Politics	
PSCI 382	Seminar: The Geopolitics of Eurasian Energy	
RUSSN 124	The Russian World	
RUSSN 250	Topics in Russian Literature (Taught in English)	
RUSSN 251	Conversation and Composition	

RUSSN 254	Russian Culture and Civilization	
RUSSN 256	Theater in Russia: January Term Study Abroad	
RUSSN 261	The Golden Age of Russian Literature (Taught in English)	
RUSSN 265	Introduction to Russian and Soviet Film (Taught in English)	
RUSSN 262	20th-Century Russian Literature (Taught in English)	
RUSSN 271	Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov (Taught in English)	
RUSSN 294	Academic Internship	
RUSSN 298	Independent Study	
RUSSN 371	Dostoevsky (in English translation)	
RUSSN 372	Topics in Contemporary Russian Society	
RUSSN 394	Academic Internship	
RUSSN 396	Directed Undergraduate Research	
RUSSN 398	Independent Research	
Total Credits		9
<p>¹ A minimum of four semesters of Russian language is required, though more is encouraged. If a student places into Russian beyond the beginner level, they are required to take enough elective courses (language or non-language) to fulfill the 9 course requirement.</p> <p>² Students may petition to count courses in which they do a significant amount of work on topics related to Russian culture, history, or politics. Examples include PSCI 215 Authoritarian Survival, PSCI 321 International Relations Seminar, ENST 283 Arctic Literature, NORW 244 Sami: Traditions in Translation. A maximum of 3.0 credits can count from study abroad.</p> <p>³ One elective must be numbered 303 or above.</p>		

Rationale:

This proposal eliminates the Russian Language major and seeks to modify the current Russian Area Studies major to become the new Russian Studies major. This decision is based on a combination of low enrollments in the upper levels of Russian and the need to maximize course usage in Russian with the shift from 6 to 5. The modified major allows more flexibility, especially for those students who are double-majoring or are unable to study abroad for a full semester. These modifications allow more students to pursue their interest in studying Russian language and culture.

This change was one of the recommendations that came out of the 2018 self-study and in conjunction with the current Russian language faculty.

Students still have the option to pursue additional work in the Russian language if they choose to do so, or they can do what most students are doing - pursue the broader Russian area studies major in connection with other majors at the college. The language major as it currently stands *requires* students to study abroad for a semester, something that fewer students want to do or are able to do in our current climate. If a student really wants to pursue Russian *language*, they certainly are free to do so. The approach we're proposing is the norm now for many critical languages with low numbers at most liberal arts colleges.