

Russian and East European Studies
University of Pennsylvania
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<https://rees.sas.upenn.edu>

THIS IS A SYLLABUS FROM THE FALL 2023. THE 2024 VERSION WILL BE AVAILABLE CLOSER TO THE START OF THE SEMESTER.

RUSSIAN 1100-401 : Advanced Russian I Russian Society Today

Course Syllabus
Fall 2023

Time and location: MW 12:00-1:30 pm Fisher-Bennett 322

Instructor: Dr. Aleksey Berg

Office: Williams 403

Office hours: Thursday, 12-1:00pm

Email: aleksey@sas.upenn.edu

Welcome to Russian 1100-401! In this course we will explore aspects of contemporary Russian culture and society through mass media, cultural artifacts, TV, and film. The major goal of this course is to help students move toward advanced proficiency in Russian in the four language skill areas (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). During the semester we will work on building active and passive vocabulary on a variety of topics, and developing higher-level language skills such as describing, narrating, giving and supporting opinions, and hypothesizing. We will also focus on more advanced and problematic grammatical concepts (verbal aspect, verbal system), complex syntax and lexicology. The course is taught in Russian.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Achieve higher levels of language proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing
- Become accustomed to hearing authentic speech spoken by a wide variety of Russian speakers
- Expand active vocabulary on a wide range of topics
- Increase ability to express yourself accurately and effectively
- Place all language learning into contemporary Russian cultural context

MATERIALS

All course materials will be selected and/or prepared by the instructor from a variety of sources and posted on Canvas.

A recommended reference book is **Terence Wade and David Gillespie’s *A Comprehensive Russian Grammar* (3rd edition, 2010)**. You may purchase this book or use a print or electronic copy at Van Pelt library. This is the Russian language program’s reference book that will serve as a good reference for you as long as you study Russian language, at Penn and beyond!

Recommended dictionaries and resources:

- [Cornell Russian Dictionary Tree](#)
- [ABBYY Lingvo](#)
- [Dictionary of verb collocations/Словарь глагольной сочетаемости](#)
- A collection of Russian-Russian dictionaries on www.gramota.ru portal

GRADING

Attendance and participation	15%
Homework (written and oral)	25%
In-class presentations	10%
Mini-quizzes	10%
3 unit tests	30%
Final Oral Interview	10%

At the end of the semester, your final percentage will determine your final course grade as follows:

A+ 99-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D 60-69
A 93-98	B 83-86	C 73-76	F 0-59
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	

Final grades are rounded up from .5 and down from .4 with the following exception: the truly outstanding final grade of A+ is strictly reserved for those who earn a 99.0% average and above.

AUDITING THE COURSE

Course audits are only allowed for graduate students with permission from their home departments. Auditing students have the same attendance, participation and homework requirements as registered students. Silent auditors are not allowed.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Regular attendance of synchronous class sessions and active participation in all class activities is absolutely essential for your progress. Each day that you are absent will not only seriously affect your attendance and participation grade, but will also affect your performance on homework and assessments. By missing class or coming to class unprepared or late, you are less likely to learn the material, will be unable to achieve your own language learning goals, and will deprive your classmates of opportunities to learn as well. At the end of the semester, your participation grade will be calculated based on the average of daily attendance and participation grades assigned using the following scale:

0	Absent
1	present, but not prepared for class; does not participate; does not stay on task and/or in Russian, does not listen to others.
2	present, but <i>minimally</i> prepared; <i>rarely</i> able to answer when called on; rarely uses Russian when required; rarely stays on task during partner/group work, rarely volunteers or contributes to group activities, rarely listens to others.
3	present, but <i>inconsistently</i> prepared; <i>sometimes</i> able to answer when called on; sometimes uses Russian when required; sometimes stays on task during partner/group work, sometimes volunteers or productively contributes to group activities, sometimes listens to others.
4	present and prepared for <i>most</i> activities; answers when called on <i>most of the time</i> , willingly and productively contributes to class activities; makes a conscious effort to use Russian as much as possible and stays on task during partner/group work; volunteers answers to open questions (not directed at anyone) with constructive comments; listens and respects contributions of others.
5	present; demonstrates high level of preparation; always answers when called on; willingly and productively participates in all class activities; uses Russian almost exclusively; stays on task during partner/group work; volunteers constructive comments; shares pertinent information; listens and respects the ideas and comments of others.

You are *not* expected to answer all questions correctly without any mistakes. In fact, mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. However, we expect that you will come to every class committed and prepared to *attempt* to answer every question, to take every opportunity to practice your Russian, and to help other students in class to do the same. If you arrive late, points will be deducted from your daily attendance and participation grade.

HOMEWORK

You will have required written and/or oral homework for each class as a way of cementing what is being done in class. You should plan to spend approximately two-three hours doing homework for every class meeting. In addition to completing assigned exercises, you should go over the material covered in class, learn and apply new vocabulary and grammar structures, and find other ways to practice Russian outside of classroom (for example, listen to music, surf the internet).

Most written homework assignments will be graded for accuracy and effort using the following scale:

5	All exercises carefully completed using appropriate reference materials (course packet, class notes, Airtable, Quizlet, or online dictionaries to look up individual words); open-ended questions and tasks show thought and attention and stretch student’s abilities beyond the required minimum .
4	Most exercises carefully completed using appropriate reference materials, but may be missing some information or contain repeating errors in key structures being actively practiced in class.

3	Some exercises done carefully, others hastily completed and contain multiple errors in key structures.
2	Most exercises hastily completed and dominated by errors in key structures.
1	Carelessly done with many mistakes, no evidence of use of appropriate reference materials.
0	Did not turn in or used AI/machine translation.

All homework is due on the dates indicated in the homework syllabus in class. Any work submitted after this time will be considered late and will receive partial credit (-1 point for every day it is late) for up to 5 calendar days.

WRITTEN TESTS

During the semester there will be three written tests, each testing material covered in the preceding thematic units. Each test will reflect the material and tasks we completed in class and as part of homework. All tests will include a reading section and a grammar/vocabulary section.

QUIZZES

To ensure the students' progress and knowledge of new vocabulary and grammar, quizzes form an important component of the program. Quizzes may be announced or unannounced and given at any time during class.

FINAL ORAL INTERVIEW

Final oral interview will be conducted by your instructor(s) outside of class and scheduled individually based on mutual availability in the last two weeks of the semester. This interview will generally consist of a spontaneous conversation with your instructor on various topics covered in class. You will be graded on content, accuracy (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary), fluency, and comprehension.

PRESENTATIONS

During the semester students will make several presentations on the topic aligned with the current course topic. The presentation should be 5-10 minutes long. Students are encouraged to use Power Point slides or any other visual aids in their talk. The presentation will be followed by a class discussion, and a peer committee vote on the merits of the talk.

Depending on the class size, presentations may be individual or group assignments.

ABSENCE POLICY

This is a language course and active participation in all class activities is key to your success in this course, as well as to the overall course dynamics and success. The language practice we engage in during class is difficult to replicate outside of class, making it hard to learn and catch up. Therefore, it is expected that you will attend and actively participate in all classes.

Recognizing that unexpected circumstances may arise, at the end of the semester your lowest two daily attendance and participation scores will be dropped. These may include absences due to physical or mental health concerns, athletic and ROTC obligations, extracurricular activities or any personal reasons.

Following [University policy](#), students may miss class and not submit work on the days of major religious holidays, if the students inform the instructor(s) about them in the first two weeks of class.

Beyond religious holidays and two lowest scores being dropped, there are no excused absences. Any additional absences beyond the 2, may hinder your understanding of the course material and impact your grade in the course. Following Penn [policy](#), a student who misses or anticipates missing 5 or more consecutive days of class should contact the school's advising office as soon as possible.

Students are responsible for making up any work missed. Do your best to submit all homework according to the posted schedule.

In this course, we use [Course Action Notices](#) to alert students to any issues. These are not punitive in nature and are an offer of support and open communication.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students of Russian at Penn may take advantage of a wealth of extra-curricular activities sponsored by the Department and by other units at Penn, including conversation gatherings (Russian conversation hour), language club events, lectures, film screenings, language competitions, and more. You may receive up to two points of extra credit added to an assessment grade for participation in such events (1 point per one event). Extra-curricular activities will be announced in class and on the [department website](#).

Students may also choose to watch a film and write a short 1+ page response to the film in Russian to earn extra credit. You may use the extensive [Mosfilm collection](#) on YouTube to find films with and without subtitles. Your response to the film should include information about whether you liked or disliked the film, characters and why. All information and language in these responses must be yours and must represent structures used in the course. The instructor reserves the right to withhold extra credit if the response paper is not carefully completed or uses unauthorized resources.

LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Student at Penn can request a Russian tutor who will attend to his/her linguistic and learning needs patiently and with care. It is a free service provided through the [Language Direct program](#) at Penn Language Center. If you are interested, you may find more information about this program using the link

above.

CLASSROOM RULES FOR RUSSIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

The following is a list of classroom rules that was devised so that all students may experience a comfortable and productive learning environment. Many of these rules are self-evident and already observed by most students. However, it is helpful for everyone in the group to understand explicitly what type of behavior is expected in Russian language classrooms. All students are expected to abide by these rules, and students will be held accountable for any infraction of these rules. Thank you for your cooperation, and please see your instructor if you have any questions or concerns.

1. All students are expected to abide by the rules of [the University of Pennsylvania Code of Academic Integrity](#) and [Code of Student Conduct](#). Any violations of the Codes, including plagiarism (representing the work of others, **including AI**, as your own) or dishonest practices during tests will be reported to the [Center of Community Standards and Accountability](#).

Specifically, in Russian-language courses, the use of machine translation (Chat GPT or any online website or program with phrasal input (where you translate or ask a system to generate whole phrases or a sentences) or any help of other speakers of Russian is considered plagiarism.

Any work you submit for a grade must be your own and must represent vocabulary and structures covered in this course.

2. As part of Student Code of Conduct, all students are expected to abide by the University's [Public Health Guidance rules](#).
3. University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the office of [Student Disabilities Services](#) (SDS). Please make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible in order to discuss your accommodations and your needs. If you have not yet contacted SDS, and would like to request accommodations or have questions, you can make an appointment by calling SDS 215.573.9235. The office is located in the [Weingarten Learning Resources Center](#) at Stouffer Commons 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300. All services are confidential.
4. In this course, you will be asked to express personal opinions and to talk and write about yourself, your family, and friends. If you prefer, you do not need to discuss or reveal any personal information; instead you may provide fictitious information. When you are being creative, you are expected to keep in mind the general purpose of the activity by using relevant vocabulary and expressions.
5. The use of profanity in the classroom (in any language) will not be tolerated.
6. The use of any electronic devices is permitted only for class work with permission of the instructor.

7. Your instructor may ask that you change your seat in order to work in pairs or small groups. You should be prepared to change your seat at your instructor's request.
8. Chewing gum or eating is not acceptable in the language classroom. Soft drinks are allowed, as long they do not interfere with your ability to speak Russian. Note, however, that many classrooms do not allow food or drink. Please observe signs where posted.

Should you have any questions regarding Russian at Penn please feel free to talk to your instructor, and, of course, at any time you are welcome to drop in on the Russian Language Program Coordinator, Dr. Maria Alley (Williams 739, (215) 746-5977, malley@sas.upenn.edu).