

University of Pittsburgh
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

Russian 0020 - Intermediate Russian I
Fall 2010 (2111)

Instructors: Beach Gray, Gerald McCausland
<http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/courses/russ0030/>

Class Schedule

MTWThF 10:00–10:50	CL 227	McCausland
MTWThF 12:00–12:50	CL 227	Gray

This course is designed and administered by both instructors working as a team. While Dr. McCausland will be responsible for teaching and grading at 10:00 am and Mr. Gray at noon, both instructors will be involved in all aspects of the course and one may occasionally teach both sections on a single day.

Instructors' office hours will be announced during the first class meeting.

Required Materials

Davis, Patricia Anne, Donald Vincent Oprendeck, Arna B. Bronstein, and Aleksandra I. Fleszar. *Making Progress in Russian: A Second Year Course*. 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997.

Merrill, Jason, Julia Mikhailova, and Maria Alley. *Animation for Russian Conversation*. Newburyport, MA: Focus/Pullins, 2009.

a bilingual Russian–English/English–Russian dictionary.

Making Progress and *Animation* are on sale at the University Book Center. Note that *Making Progress in Russian* consists of several components. Be very careful when purchasing used textbooks or from online sellers. The program consists of a textbook and workbook packaged together with an audio program on CDs. All components of the package are required.

An English–Russian dictionary will be necessary to do successful work in this course, but the instructors have not mandated a particular choice. Students planning to major in Russian might even now consider investing in a serious unabridged academic dictionary of Russian. For the purposes of this course, however, a medium-sized pocket dictionary will probably suffice. Feel free to consult your instructor for advice if you are unsure of what dictionary to purchase.

A courseweb site has been set up for this course, but we will make only limited use of it for specific assignments.

The faculty is acutely aware of how expensive language textbooks have become. *Making Progress in Russian* will be the basic textbook for both semesters of Intermediate Russian. It is anticipated that students in the spring term will be asked to purchase, at most, one additional secondary text at a modest price.

Goals of the Course

This course is the first half of a year-long course in Russian language at the intermediate level. It is more than simply a continuation of the first-year course—it has several interrelated but discrete goals.

1. **Language structure, aka grammar.** The intermediate course will focus very deliberately on the development of a strong foundation in the structures of Russian. By the end of the second year, students will know virtually the entire domain of Russian morphology, including regular paradigms and exceptional and rarely-used forms, and will be familiar with the basic syntactic patterns of the Russian sentence, including compound and complex structures.
2. **Reading.** The intermediate course will develop students' ability to read authentic non-literary texts written by and for native speakers of Russian.
3. **Writing.** Through guided assignments, students will learn to express themselves formally in written compositions.
4. **Conversation and oral expression.** Students will continue to develop their communicative skills in spoken Russian with an emphasis on sentence-level discourse. Students are expected to strive at all times to express themselves in complete sentences.

Course Format and Methodology

The course presumes active learning on the part of all students. It is not the instructor's job to teach the material to you. The instructor's role is to provide you with extensive opportunities to practice in class what you have learned during your homework preparation. While instructors are available both during class and in office hours to provide help with difficult material, instructors will not teach material in class that was expected to be learned at home.

Homework will consist of various combinations of reading assignments, preparation of activities and exercises, and the completion of written homework assignments, many of which include a listening component. Activities and exercises should be reviewed outside of class, all new vocabulary should be learned, and students should be prepared to engage fully in these activities in class.

In order to provide the maximum opportunity for spoken language practice, *Russian is the only language to be used by both student and instructor during a normal class meeting*. A no-English rule will be strictly enforced. You will only learn Russian by speaking it and your full active participation in every class session is required. It is your responsibility to thoroughly learn the assigned material as you will not be able to ask for instructions or clarifications in English.

The only exception to this no-English rule will be the second half of Friday classes during which the instructor will occasionally use English to review particularly nuanced issues of the language and culture. These diversions will be kept to a minimum. There will also be a short Q&A session in English during the second day of class in order to clarify any issues with this course overview.

Requirements

1. Participation in all aspects of the course is mandatory. This course is designed to develop all language skills and cannot accommodate students who wish to learn only the written language. Asking the instructor in this course not to require active spoken participation in recitation is every bit as unreasonable as asking a calculus instructor to teach only addition and subtraction.
2. Attendance is mandatory for all class sessions. Instructors will not review or re-teach material to students who were absent from class. Students absent from class will receive a zero for that day (see below for grading system). Instructors are not obligated to accept late homework due to an absence.

3. Students are required in the second year to learn to keyboard in the Cyrillic alphabet and must be capable of preparing and submitting computer-generated homework. The instructors will provide some help with this during the first week of the semester, but ultimately this skill is the responsibility of the student. Learn by doing! It's the way Russians themselves learn to type.
4. Students should come to class fully prepared. Written homework will be assigned for practically every class meeting and must be turned in on the day it is due. Late homework will not be accepted. Instructors will return homework promptly. Courseweb assignments will be due at 8:00 am on its due date (practically, this probably means the night before) in order to allow instructors to review the assignment before class.
5. Davis/Opredek provides a list of active vocabulary at the end of each chapter. However, the active vocabulary will *not* be tested at the end of each unit, but rather students are expected to learn active vocabulary *on the day that it is encountered* in a homework assignment. Vocabulary acquisition must become an every-day activity. Worksheets designed by the instructors will provide guidance on what vocabulary should be learned actively from reading assignments.
6. The first 20 minutes of every Friday class will be devoted to a formal written quiz on the grammar and vocabulary that has been learned during the previous five class days. These quizzes will be graded on the American 100% scale. The grammar quiz cannot be made up—students absent for that class will receive a zero for that quiz. However, the lowest two grades from among these Friday grammar/vocab quizzes (which would include any zeros) will be dropped for every student at the end of the semester.
7. Other occasional quizzes, announced or unannounced, will be given throughout the semester. The grades for these quizzes, on the 2–5 scale, will be averaged into the daily classroom grade. No quiz may be made up for any reason.
8. There will be two 50-minute written midterm exams given during class time, and two oral midterm exam that may take the form of in-class events or out-of-class interviews. There are no “chapter tests.” All midterms must be taken at the scheduled time. If a student misses a midterm or final exam due to his/her being seriously ill or due to a death in the family, the instructor must be informed no later than the day of the test and **the circumstances must be documented** in order to have the zero removed from the record.
9. The final examination for this class is currently scheduled for Tuesday, December 14th at 8:00 am. Plan for this now. Under no circumstances will the final examination be rescheduled to accommodate travel plans.

Grading and Evaluation

The final course grade will be computed as follows:

- Daily class grade: 22%
- Written Midterm Exams (2 x 9%): 18%
- Friday Grammar/Vocab Quizzes: 18%
- Written homework (including compositions and courseweb): 16%
- Oral “Exams” (2 x 7%): 14%
- Final Exam: 12%

You will receive a daily grade for your performance in class. This is not so much a class-participation grade as an evaluation of your preparation for the lesson and of your ability to use Russian. Written homework assignments will receive a grade wither on the Russian 2–5 scale or an American-style letter grade, depending on the nature of the assignment.

Students who miss no more than *one* class during the course of the semester will have their *three* lowest grammar/vocab quiz grades dropped (all other students have their *two* lowest dropped).

Test and Examination Schedule

Tuesday, 5 October 2010	Written Midterm #1
Friday, 12 November 2010	Written Midterm #2
Tuesday, 14 December 2010	Final Examination

The date(s) of the oral midterm “events” will be announced *at least two weeks* before the date. The format will be described in detail *at least one week* before the date.

Academic Integrity

By remaining enrolled in the course, you not only agree to abide by the stipulations of this course overview, but also understand that we will follow rigorously the rules spelled out in the *Handbook on Integrity* regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these rules and observe them. Any infraction will be penalized accordingly.

Disability

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Miscellaneous notes

A solid knowledge of English grammar will help you in this course. If you do not know English grammar well, you are likely to encounter problems at some point in the course. Please seek out your instructor after class or during office hours if this is a problem.

Do not hesitate to seek out either of the course instructors should you find yourself in need of extra help.

Students who wish to engage the help of a private tutor are advised to consult with Christine Metil in the Slavic Department main office. She maintains a list of Russian majors and native speakers who offer this service. Payment is negotiated directly between the tutor and the student.