LANGUAGE OF THE MONTH
Russian

Why Study Russian?
“Новый язык - это новая жизнь.”
A new language is a new life.

Eating Authentically in Boston
Local restaurants and markets to visit

Russian & Ukrainian
How similar are they?

Language of the Month
Film Discussion

Add to Your Playlist
Artists and Podcasters to Follow

Faculty Spotlight
The ERC offers Language Link for Russian! Language Link hosts several informal, half-hour discussions each week. Sessions are led by a native speaker and are offered at three different levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.
COMMUNITY
The Russian Program at Boston University is a particularly active and close-knit group of students and faculty. The Russian Program offers beginning, intermediate, and advanced Russian courses, including blended mode first-year Russian.

PRACTICE
Russian majors reach either an high intermediate or low advanced level of proficiency and are expected to be able to communicate effectively in the language. Many of our students double major in Russian and other disciplines; students interested in studying Russian in conjunction with another major may also elect a minor in Russian language and culture.

IMMERSION
Our students take part in a wide array of educational and entertaining activities, including poetry readings, invited speakers’ lectures and workshops, making films in Russian, and learning Russian cuisine. By learning Russian, you can gain a deeper understanding of a rich and complex culture.

For more info, please contact:
Svitlana Malykhina
Coordinator of Russian Language Program

Yuri Corrigan
Assistant Professor of Russian and Comp. Lit.
Meet Boston University Professor Alexis Peri, Associate Professor of History. Professor Peri focuses on the history of modern Russia and Eastern Europe, particularly the Soviet period with an emphasis on the history of modern warfare, terror and terrorism, and US-Soviet relations.
1. What got you interested in Russian history?

I have always been fascinated by history because I am someone who loves to sink into a narrative. History contains the most intriguing stories of them all, teaching us about human struggle and resilience. I became interested in Russian history when I started college and realized that up to that point, I had only studied topics like World War II or the Cold War from a US-centric point of view. I became intrigued with the idea of studying some of those world events from other points of view, so I signed up for a slew of courses, including many in Russian history.

2. How did you learn Russian?

I started studying Russian rather late, after I graduated from college. But I went about it with great energy and determination. I got a job at a US university, where I could take Russian every day during my lunch break. I also did two intense and exhilarating summers at Middlebury College's Russian school. Then, after two years, I kept taking college courses on my lunch hour and spent my summers abroad. I studied language at St. Petersburg State University and Moscow State University. Then, I enrolled in graduate school and kept up my studies there. The main way I learned, though, was by living abroad in Russia for the years that I was doing my dissertation and other book research. Making friends is the best way to learn and practice any language.
3. Why is it more important than ever to study Russian?

I think current events show quite plainly why studying Russian (as well as Ukrainian and many other languages) is so critical. We live in a world where understanding and empathy are undervalued qualities and in very short supply. Language study is a crucial way for us to repair some of those deficits and to get to know other cultures on a more intimate level, through conversation, travel, extensive study—all of which are made possible by language skills.

4. Do you have any advice or tips for those who want to learn a new language such as Russian?

My advice would be to practice as much as possible, whether by reading the news, watching films, or talking with friends and teachers. Language is a "use or lose it" skill, so even if you do not know a lot of a language, even if you are a beginner, look for ways to practice and do not be shy about asking people to speak with you.

Tip

One of the best ways to learn a new language and culture is through comedy and satire. Masyanya is a popular Russian cartoon series for adults with a healthy dose of social commentary. Episodes are available with either Russian or English subtitles.
Victory Day (День победы) commemorates the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, which Russian speakers refer to as the Great Patriotic War (Великая Отечественная война). While the United States, Great Britain, and France commemorate Germany’s capitulation on May 8, the Soviet Union celebrated on May 9 instead. During the war, the Soviet Union lost 20-30 million citizens, including 8.6 million soldiers. Victory Day provided an important opportunity for surviving relatives to mourn the dead and celebrate veterans.

The Second World War remains a powerful cultural and political touchstone in Russia. Most recently, Vladimir Putin and Russian state propaganda have leveraged the Soviet Union’s role in defeating Nazi Germany for contemporary political ends by portraying Ukrainians as neo-Nazis who persecute ethnic Russians living in Ukraine. Although these claims are widely touted, they do not reflect the reality in Ukraine. For deeper analysis of these propaganda narratives, check out recent blog posts from Prof. Timothy Snyder and the Atlantic Council.
Learn More

The SRB Podcast features weekly, English language interviews with academics, journalists, and policy makers on Eurasian politics, history, and society. Subscribe via your favorite podcast app!

Katerina Gordeeva launched her Youtube channel, Tell Gordeeva, where she interviews prominent Russian-speaking artists, academics, journalists, and other public intellectuals. Episodes with Russian-English headings include English subtitles!

An ethnic Ukrainian, educated in Russia, Yury Dud’s Youtube channel features interviews with famous authors, film directors, musicians, and intellectuals from Russia. Independent podcasts and vlogs like Dud’s play a vital role in Russian today by providing alternatives to state controlled media channels.

Max’s Comprehensible Russian Podcast is designed for intermediate and advanced Russian learners. Listeners find that Max’s materials support their listening comprehension, enabling them to pick up new words and expressions in context.

Click the images to learn more
A young man of just 22, dressed in a black beret and a dark narrow suit, is on an airplane flying from St. Petersburg to Paris. It is 1961 and Rudolf Nureyev, not yet the imperious figure of legend, is a member of the world-renowned Kirov Ballet, traveling for the first time outside of the Soviet Union.

Parisian life delights Nureyev, and the young dancer is eager to consume all the culture, art, and music the city has to offer. But the KGB officers who watch his every move become increasingly suspicious of his behavior and his friendship with the young Parisienne, Clara Saint.
SUPPORT FOLKS OPPOSED TO THE WAR

The following businesses and Russian musicians have either released statements condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine or hosted fundraisers in support of Ukrainian refugees.

RESTAURANT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Cafe St. Petersburg
- Moldova Restaurant
- South Boston Lithuanian Kitchen

FOOD MARKETS

- Bazaar
- Baza

RUSSIAN ARTISTS TO FOLLOW

- Morgenshtern
- Noize MC
- Oxxymiron
- DDT
- IC3PEAK
- Shortparis

UKRAINIAN ARTISTS TO SUPPORT

- Okean Elzy
- Odyn v Kanoe
- Alina Pash
- DakhaBrakha
- Kalush

Click "Play" to access a playlist of songs that Russian and Ukrainian artists have either released or performed in response to the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.
Facts on the Ukrainian and Russian Language

Did you know?
Ukrainian and Russian are both East Slavic languages. They began to diverge roughly 1000 years ago and, by the 18th century, had evolved into separate languages. Today, Russian and Ukrainian share about 62% of their vocabulary (compared to 82% similarity between Spanish and Italian). Click here to learn more about the similarities and differences between these two languages!

Many Ukrainians are bilingual in Ukrainian and Russian, especially in cities and in eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. Monolingual Ukrainian-speakers are more common in rural areas and in western Ukraine. Since 2014 though, young, urban Ukrainians across the country have increasingly embraced Ukrainian as their national language.

Kyiv or Kiev? You may have seen conflicting spellings for Ukrainian cities in the news. While Kiev reflects Russian spelling and pronunciation, Kyiv is the Ukrainian name for the country's capital. Using indigenous geographical names is an important step toward overcoming the historic suppression of Ukrainian language and culture under the Russian Empire, the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Soviet Union.

Click here to learn more about language usage in Ukraine.
WAYS TO SUPPORT UKRAINE

1. Ukraine Forward is a local organization, based out of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Jamaica Plains. They are collecting both medical and non-weapon supplies for soldiers. You can help by volunteering or donating.

2. Sunflower of Peace is a local organization focused exclusively on medical supplies for Ukraine. You can volunteer or donate.

3. Visit NPR's website for more information on how to aid Ukraine. They list great organizations that are dedicated to offering relief, including UNICEF and Save the Children.