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Русский язык 204
Intermediate Russian (Fourth Semester)
Tulane University
Spring, 2010

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Class hrs: MWF 2:00-2:50

office hour MWF 1:00 – 1:50, T 12:00-12:50 N305B
and by appointment
do not call department
call cell 504-495-3877, leave message

Dear Students,

Welcome to Russian 204, the fourth semester of Russian language. Prerequisite: Russ 203 or equivalent, or placement in 204.

This class is the gateway to advanced study, in Russian, of Russian literature. Congratulations for going into the fourth semester of this fascinating but difficult language!

In this class you'll get a close look at Dostoevsky's masterpiece Преступление и наказание. We will also advance all the fundamental skills: speak/listen/read/write. We'll do it all. This course is no longer another ho-hu grind through the end of Начало. We will read real literature and write about it.

As you have seen in your past studies of Russian, this language is complex—it has full declensions of nominal phrases, for example—and it is relatively more foreign than Romance or Germanic languages in its less recognizable vocabulary and in some of its syntax. Nonetheless you have seen that much progress can be made very rapidly, especially if you have an on-site study tour in Russia as your goal! You can do it, and you can derive immeasurable delight in the process. I studied Russian for Dostoevsky's sake, and discovered a rich a subtle literature no less remarkable for its poetry than for its monumental novels and moving short stories. Russian is just as valuable for the student of law, business, science, and engineering. Stay with it! No matter how much Russian you don't know yet, you can still advance your skills and enjoy it too.

Course Description

Russian 204 presents a look into Part I of *Crime and Punishment*, with lectures and discussions in Russian. Aural-oral skills will be fostered in class presentations and group study. I especially like a 3 1/2 hr. radio broadcast of C & P that I have in MP3 format; I can let you copy it to your computers. I also have an actor's reading of the entire novel. Each student will make a presentation in English on a topic germane to our theme, with a summary to be presented orally and in writing in Russian. We will have regular short-composition assignments to refine accuracy and sophistication of expression in Russian.

We will interweave our readings with a glance at the Word List I prepared for Russian 333, which includes a range of topics, especially a good group of hard-core useful verbal constructions, with examples. We will see how you like this.

I've promised that we won't let *Crime and Pun* turn into a grind. We are free to move to another text after the midterm of the semester, if we so desire — but, attention, I don't have another textbook for any other work. Nonetheless, we can find a comprise.

Keep me informed on your reactions to our work. I am eager for your suggestions!

Course Outcomes:

The student completing Russ. 204

- (1) will read Dostoevsky with accuracy and understanding and a good feel for his syntax and vocabulary
- (2) will be able to respond to questions about the central themes of C & P with pertinent vocabulary and coherence, using complex utterances, conditionals, impersonal constructions, indefinite subjects and much much more
- (3) will write clear and accurate paragraphs on a variety of literary topics
- (4) will understand spontaneous Russian speech at slow to moderate tempi, with relatively high comprehension
- (5) will have attained the level of skill performance in reading, writing, speaking and understanding equivalent to the mid-second year of university Russian

(6) will be well prepared for a study tour in Russia which demands preparation of two-to-three years of university study

Mission:

The Russian Language and Literature B.A. program supports Tulane's mission to create, communicate and conserve knowledge (1) by providing students with a strong active knowledge of the Russian language and culture, by teaching the skills of reading, writing, speaking and understanding of Russian across a four-year graduated program of studies integrated with a wide range of cultural realia, and (2) by developing our students' critical ability to understand and analyze a wide range of cultural artifacts from the Russian-speaking world, including national history, the Russian émigré experience, literary texts, films, visual and aural art, political and cultural history and philosophy.

Expected Course Outcomes:

Outcome 2

Integrate and advance language skills in 300 levels through composition, textual readings, oral presentations and discussions in the target language; advance and develop cultural understanding in readings and compositions on historical, artistic and philosophical topics. Вперёд к светлому, сияющему будущему!

Texts

Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Part I. Scriptum by George Cummins. i-iii and 188 pp.

Russian Word List for 333. Scriptum by George Cummins. 25 pp.

The packet of two books is available to you from me at the price of \$20, essentially the cost of reproduction. This amazing offer is not in stores, not in the bookstore.

Course Requirements:

Attendance is essential for success in acquiring language skills and is mandatory in this class. Unexcused absences will be reflected in the participation grade (see below); after four such absences, the final grade will be reduced by one point (A > A-, A- > B+, etc.) for each absence. Students are strongly encouraged to attend as regularly as possible, and in return have the instructor's word that they will not be badgered, grilled, or punished for incomplete homework assignments. All students who attend this class are sure to learn some Russian and will be treated with respect.

Note: *“Instructors are not authorized to excuse absences that extend calendar holidays. Only the student’s dean may excuse such absences. A student who has excessive unexcused absences or ceases to attend a course without an official withdrawal will, at the instructor’s request and with the approval of the associate dean, be withdrawn from the course and receive a grade of WF.”*
(University policy)

May I quote to you from our departmental policy on introductory and intermediate language classes: “Actively participating in class, that is, interacting with others in the target language, is the single most important aspect of language learning.” Participation includes not only attending class and participating in discussion and debate, but also completing homework on time, reading and preparing the assigned text materials, and asking questions when you do not understand.”

I ask you to do written homework assignments on time as much as possible, to participate in class recitation and discussion, to ask questions when I am unclear, to take quizzes and tests with good humor and equanimity. The key to learning a language is good, steady work, work that is sustained and pleasurable that is goal-directed toward real results. Be prepared to enjoy what you are doing and to do it regularly.

In the course of the semester we will have scheduled in-class conferences to discuss your progress and your grades in Russian.

Outcomes:

- (1) regular attendance will stimulate regular learning of speaking and writing skills, learning of grammar and vocabulary
- (2) attendance will allow students to have immediate response from the instructor on written and oral work and to prepare strategies for study
- (3) regular submission of homework assignments, even if in incomplete form, will make the tasks clear and understandable

Tests

I will offer four take-home quizzes on topics of your choice, all of them literature-oriented. I’ll announce the due dates well in advance. You will have a week to prepare your quiz. There will be no unannounced quizzes, no final examination, no midterm.

Outcomes:

- (1) quizzes will aid the student in synthesizing all the principles and materials of a ‘unit’, or sustained period of reading and discussion

- (2) quizzes will serve as a check on vocabulary building and grammar
- (3) quizzes, as they are graded, will give the student a rough notion of how he is doing
- (4) quizzes will incentivize achievement and reward good work
- (5) quizzes will help the instructor evaluate and regulate his teaching plan, identify and correct weak or poorly presented material

Sample topics for major presentations (in English, with Russian oral and written summary). Note that some are vaster than others; try to focus down on a single argument.

1. Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky and his intellectual relationship with Dostoevsky
2. *Notes from Underground* and *Crime and P*
3. The madonna-prostitute image in Dostoevsky's fiction; *Кроткая*, *Софья Семёновна Мармеладова*, *Лиза*; *Настасья Филлиповна*
5. Почвенничество
6. Final Questions: the Epilogue to *C & P*
7. Svidrigajlov and Raskolnikov
8. Meetings with Porfiry Petrovich
9. Self-destruction and the Meaning of Love
10. Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*
11. Pisarev: "A Scandal among the Nihilists" -- What is Nihilism?

Outcomes:

- (1) advance communicative competence in the skills of speaking and writing
- (2) advance and develop cultural understanding in readings and compositions on historical and philosophical topics
- (3) advance communicative competence in understanding and responding to fellow students

Grades:

The course grade will be computed on the basis of:

quizzes	40%
recitation, in-class	
reports	40%
compositions	20%

Scale:

93-100	A	72-76	C
89-92	A-	69-71	C-
86-88	B+	67-68	D+
82-85	B	62-66	D
79-81	B-	58-61	D-
77-79	C+	x-57	F

Disabilities

If you have special needs related to a disability that may affect your performance in the course, please speak to the instructor after class or arrange an appointment to discuss your needs privately. This should be done as early as possible in the semester.

Schedule of Work

All assignments will be posted in advance on my site.