

Harriman Institute/East Central European Center Graduate Course Listing
Fall 2026
Accurate as of 7.9.2026

The following courses fulfill the regional course requirements for the Harriman Institute/East Central European Certificate, the MA in Regional Studies: Russia, Eurasia, and Eastern Europe (MARS-REERS), and the SIPA Regional Specialization. Further course details may be found by visiting the appropriate department's website.

Please Note: Any course marked with an asterisk (***) must be approved for regional credit by a Harriman advisor prior to enrollment. For Harriman approval of courses not listed which you believe may fulfill regional requirements, please contact [Rebecca Dalton](#) or [Elise Giuliano](#).

Regional Languages: The following languages satisfy the Harriman Certificate & MARS-REERS language requirements and are currently being offered: Armenian, Czech, Hungarian, ***Persian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian-Bosnian, ***Turkish, Ukrainian, and Yiddish. Please consult the Directory of Classes for language times and sections.

Room assignments and class schedules are subject to change. Please consult the Columbia Directory of Classes on-line at www.columbia.edu/cu/bulletin/uwb for final confirmation.

Comparative Literature: Russian

DOSTOEVSKY, TOLSTOY AND THE ENGLISH NOVEL

Comparative Literature: Russian GU4011 Call Number: 10748 Points: 3

Day/Time: MW 10:10-11:25am **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Liza Knapp

A close reading of works by Dostoevsky (*Netochka Nezvanova*; *The Idiot*; *A Gentle Creature*) and Tolstoy (*Childhood, Boyhood, Youth*; *Family Happiness*; *Anna Karenina*; *The Kreutzer Sonata*) in conjunction with related English novels (Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*). No knowledge of Russian is required.

POETS, REBELS, EXILES: 100 YEARS OF RUSSIANS AND RUSSIAN JEWS IN AMERICA

Comparative Literature: Russian GU4037 Call Number: 10794 Points: 3

Day/Time: R 12:10-2:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Anna Katsnelson

Poets, Rebels, Exiles examines the successive generations of the most provocative and influential Russian and Russian Jewish writers and artists who brought the cataclysm of the Soviet and post-Soviet century to North America. From Joseph Brodsky—the bad boy bard of Soviet Russia and a protégé of Anna Akhmatova, who served 18 months of hard labor near the North Pole for social parasitism before being exiled—to the most recent artistic descendants, this course will interrogate diaspora, memory, and nostalgia in the cultural production of immigrants and exiles.

ANARCHIST THOUGHT, ART AND ACTION

Comparative Literature: Russian GU4114 Call Number: 14449 Points: 3

Day/Time: T 2:10-4:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Jessica E Merrill

“Anarchy is Order!” proclaims the modern anarchist movement. The anarchist values not violence and chaos, but democracy, solidarity, and freedom from all forms of coercion. The ideal society is antiauthoritarian and decentralized, comprised of voluntary associations of free and equal individuals. In this course we will dissect these ideas, debating anarchist conceptions of freedom, authority, and human nature, beginning with late 18th-19th c. figures (Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Tolstoy) and ending with more recent developments in this tradition (ecological thought, indigeneity, gender). We will engage with these ideas as expressed in political essays, but also in art (drama, poetry, visual art, fairytales, children’s literature, science fiction), and in autobiographical writing. How, we may ask, are anarchist values and critique formulated differently in these different modes of expression? What is the place of art and aesthetic experience in a radically liberatory movement? Readings will be studied in their historical contexts, especially moments of revolutionary action: across Europe in 1848, in Russia and Ukraine (1917-1921), during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), led by the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico (1994-).

There are no prerequisites for this class; all readings will be available in English.

COLD WAR REASON: CYBERNETICS AND THE SYSTEMS SCIENCES

Comparative Literature: Russian GU4213 Call Number: 10787 Points: 3

Day/Time: M 4:10-6:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Adam Leeds

The Cold War epoch saw broad transformations in science, technology, and politics. At their nexus a new knowledge was proclaimed, cybernetics, a putative universal science of communication and control. It has disappeared so completely that most have forgotten that it ever existed. Its failure seems complete and final. Yet in another sense, cybernetics was so powerful and successful that the concepts, habits, and institutions born with it have become intrinsic parts of our world and how we make sense of it. Key cybernetic concepts of information, system, and feedback are now fundamental to our basic ways of understanding the mind, brain and computer, of grasping the economy and ecology, and finally of imagining the nature of human life itself. This course will trace the echoes of the cybernetic explosion from the wake of World War II to the onset of Silicon Valley euphoria.

RUSSIAN FORMALISM

Comparative Literature: Russian GR611 Call Number: 10787 Points: 4

Day/Time: R 2:10-4:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Jessica E Merrill

Twenty-first century literary studies has seen a steadily growing interest in formalist literary theory. This trend has manifested in new movements, such as New Formalism, Historical Poetics, and Quantitative Formalism. This interest in formalism has been accompanied by a widely expressed

desire for a better understanding of literary form, and to find ways to connect its study with cultural and political history. The archive of Russian Formalism, a protean movement which was active in the 1910s and 1920s, is a rich source for those interested in rethinking the concept of form today. Beginning in the 1960s and '70s, Russian Formalism was interpreted as the precursor to French Structuralism and Post-Structuralism. In this class we seek to recontextualize Russian Formalism—not in terms of the ideas of the Cold War period—but rather in light of the cultural and political milieu of revolutionary and Civil War era Russia. By connecting theories of form with the cultural and political contexts from which they emerged, our goal is to develop an understanding of form as a concept defined not only in aesthetic or linguistic terms, but also as a construct with sociopolitical import.

Comparative Literature: Slavic

HEBREW: HISTORY, POLITICS, CULTURE, LITE

Comparative Literature: Slavic GU4000 Call Number: 11937 **Points:** 3

Day/Time: R 2:10-4:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Ofer Dynes

This class offers an introduction to Hebrew culture from a historical and literary perspective, focusing on the intersection of linguistic ideology, and literary and cultural creativity. What, we will ask, is the relationship between what people think about Hebrew and what they write in Hebrew?

We will investigate the manners in which Hebrew was imagined – as the language of God, the language of the Jews, the language of the patriarchy, the language of secularism, the language of Messianism, the language of nationalism, a dead language, a diasporic Eastern European language, a local Middle Eastern Language, ext., and how these conflicting imaginaries informed Hebrew creativity.

This class does not require prior knowledge of Hebrew. Students proficient in Hebrew, Yiddish, Arabic, Ladino, and/or European languages are encouraged to contact the instructor in advance for supplementary material in these languages.

EXPERIMENTAL CULTURES

Comparative Literature: Slavic GU4011 Call Number: 13493 **Points:** 3

Day/Time: T 4:10-6:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructors: Aleksandar Boskovic and Christopher Caes

This seminar course will provide a punctual survey of trends and figures in the experimental cultures of East Central Europe. Formations include the avant-gardes (first, postwar, and postcommunist); experimental Modernisms and Postmodernisms; alternative film, media, and visual culture; and formally inventive responses to exceptional historical circumstances. Proceeding roughly chronologically from early twentieth to early twenty-first centuries, we will examine expressionist/surrealistic painting and drama; zenithist hybrid genres such as cinépoetry and proto-conceptualist writing; mixed-media relief sculpture; post-conceptual art; experimental and animated film; and avant-garde classical music. In terms of theory, we will draw on regional and global

approaches to artistic experimentation ranging from Marxist and other theories of value through discourses of the body and sexuality in culture to contemporary affect theory. The course will be taught in English with material drawn primarily from Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Each session will include a lecture followed by discussion.

History

THE BLACK SEA IN HISTORY

History GU4218 Call Number: 11192 **Points:** 4

Day/Time: W 4:10-6:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Notes: ADD TO WAITLIST FOR INSTRUCTOR APPROVAL TO JOIN ROSTER

Instructor: Catherine Evtuhov

We are used to thinking of history in national terms, or at least in reference to major civilizations ("Western civilization," "Near Eastern civilization," etc.). In "real life," however, interactions among people, linguistic communities, and cultures frequently cut across political divisions. Water - rivers, streams, seas - is often an invitation to settlement, commerce, and conquest. This course offers a look (inspired in part by Fernand Braudel's *Mediterranean*) at a body of water - the Black Sea - and the lands around it, in sweeping historical perspective. Focus is on those moments when the various civilizations and empires that originated and flourished around the Black Sea met and intersected in friendship or in enmity. We will look at ancient civilizations, Greek colonization, Byzantine-Slav interactions, the period of Ottoman dominance, Russian-Turkish rivalry, and decolonization and wars in the 19th and 20th centuries. We hope that we will be able to pay particular attention to questions of ecology, language, religion, and cultural interaction throughout.

CULTURE IN POLISH LANDS

History GU4281 Call Number: 11200 **Points:** 4

Day/Time: R 4:10-6:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Notes: ADD TO WAITLIST FOR INSTRUCTOR APPROVAL TO JOIN ROSTER

Instructor: Malgorzata Mazurek

Few places in the world have witnessed the shift from a multiethnic territory to a nationally homogeneous nation-state as profoundly as the Polish lands. A crucial site of the collapse of Central and Eastern European empires, the Holocaust, ethnic cleansings, Nazi occupation, Soviet-style socialism, and accession to the European Union, Poland's twentieth-century and contemporary culture has developed in the shadow of catastrophe and political and economic revolutions.

This seminar investigates shifting meanings of cultural difference and sameness from 1918 to the present, including Polish debates on multiculturalism spurred by the ongoing European refugee crisis. We will examine meanings attached to people, things, and landscapes - Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, German, Nazi or Soviet - through the lens of visual arts, everyday objects, scholarly discourses, and urban and rural topographies. While we will pay special attention to the historiography of twentieth-century Eastern Europe, the course relies on interdisciplinary approaches and welcomes students interested in the history of art and architecture, literature, social history, anthropology, cultural studies, and critical museology.

STALINISM

History GU4389 Call Number: 11212 **Points:** 4

Day/Time: R 10:10am-12:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Notes: ADD TO WAITLIST FOR INSTRUCTOR APPROVAL TO JOIN ROSTER

Instructor: Yana Skorobogatov

The quarter century during which Joseph Stalin ruled the Soviet Union witnessed some of the twentieth century's most dramatic events: history's fastest plunge into modernity, an apocalyptic world war, and the emergence of a socialist state as a competitive world power. This tutorial will offer students a deep dive not only into the historical depths of the Stalin era but into the gloriously complex historiographical debates that surround it. Some of the questions that will animate the readings, writings, and discussions that students will engage in are as follows: Did Stalin depart from or represent a continuation of the policies introduced by his predecessor Vladimir Lenin? Did he rule in a totalitarian fashion or in ways comparable to other twentieth century regimes? Were his policies destructive or possibly productive? And perhaps most boggling of all: Why did no one resist Stalinist rule?

Political Science

*****GLOBAL ENERGY: SECURITY/GEOPOLITICS**

Political Science GU4814 Call Number: 13359 **Points:** 3

Day/Time: MW 10:10-11:25am **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Albert Bininachvili

The course focuses on the nexus between energy and security as it reveals in the policies and interaction of leading energy producers and consumers. Topics include: Hydrocarbons and search for stability and security in the Persian Gulf, Caspian basin, Eurasia, Africa and Latin America; Russia as a global energy player; Analysis of the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on energy markets, global security, and the future of the energy transition; Role of natural gas in the world energy balance and European energy security; Transformation of the global energy governance structure; Role and evolution of the OPEC; Introduction into energy economics; Dynamics and fundamentals of the global energy markets; IOCs vs NOCs; Resource nationalism, cartels, sanctions and embargoes; Asia's growing energy needs and its geo-economic and strategic implications; Nuclear energy and challenges to non-proliferation regime; Alternative and renewable sources of energy; Climate change as one of the central challenges of the 21st century; Analysis of the policies, technologies, financial systems and markets needed to achieve climate goals. Climate change and attempts of environmental regulation; Decarbonization trends, international carbon regimes and search for optimal models of sustainable development. Special focus on implications of the shale revolution and technological innovations on U.S. energy security.

Regional Institute

WRITING ON EURASIA

Regional Institute 6522IA Call Number: 15413 **Points:** 1.5

Day/Time: R 3:10-5:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Notes: SIPA Subterm B Oct 20-Dec 14

Instructor: Justin Burke

This course is designed to help MA-level students improve their researching and writing skills, and become adept at distilling acquired knowledge into straightforward prose. The aim is to assist students in being more effective communicators regardless of whether they pursue careers in academia, journalism, government service, private enterprise or the non-governmental sector. The course will also promote better understanding of how to get work published by mass media outlets. The course places particular emphasis on practical work, including the preparation of commentaries and book reviews concerning current affairs in Eurasia. Lectures examine the basic elements of editing, interviewing and concise writing. Other lectures focus on how to maintain personal and digital security while living and researching/working in Eurasia, and discuss best practices on harnessing social media for career advancement. Guest speakers will provide additional perspectives on ways to make writing on academic topics more accessible to the general reading public, and how to leverage expertise in Eurasian-area affairs in ways that can jump-start careers.

SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION IN EURASIA: COMPETITION, CONFLICT, AND WAR

Regional Institute 6534IA Call Number: 15463 **Points:** 3

Day/Time: M 3:10-5:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Matthew H Murray

In Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and other countries of the Eurasia region, corruption is systemic. Corruption, defined as the abuse of public trust and power for private gain, is institutionalized in government at the national, regional, and local levels. Formal government decision-making processes have been captured by informal networks of political and business elites who exert significant control over the allocation of public resources. They utilize this control to make illegal financial gains with the support of government authorities and protection of the law.

When President Putin began Russia's expanded military invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the imprisoned Russian anticorruption activist and political opposition leader Alexey Navalny was on trial once again over fabricated charges of embezzlement. Though Mr. Navalny faced another 15 years in a penal colony, he seized the opportunity during his February 24 hearing to publicly state his opposition to Russia's war on Ukraine. "This war between Russia and Ukraine was unleashed to cover up the theft from Russian citizens and divert their attention from problems that exist inside the country," he said.

This seminar examines the role that Russia's systemic corruption played as a cause of Russia's war against Ukraine. Is the war an extension, and drastic escalation, of the Putin regime's campaign against both his own citizens and the citizens of post-Maidan Ukraine? We will consider how the Kremlin's strategic use of corruption is threatening the sovereignty of other nations in Eurasia.

This seminar analyzes the political economy, power relationships, historical and cultural factors that have engendered systemic corruption in Eurasian countries. We identify different types of corrupt systems that have emerged in the regions. We will also examine how systemic corruption causes conflict and war, and poses a threat to the global economy and democracy. Finally, we analyze various anti-corruption reforms to understand why some failed while others succeeded.

The seminar will benefit SIPA and Harriman Institute students who specialize in regional studies of countries of Eurasia. It will also benefit SIPA and other graduate students who specialize in international security, economics, finance, energy, law, development, conflict resolution, and journalism. To achieve a deep understanding of Eurasia corruption, we will examine causes and impacts from an interdisciplinary perspective.

CENTRAL ASIAN POLITICS AND SECURITY

Regional Institute 6652IA Call Number: 15414 Points: 3

Day/Time: T 5:10-7:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Lawrence Markowitz

This course surveys the politics and history of the five countries of contemporary Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). In addition to imparting a substantive understanding of these countries, the course explores several conceptual lenses through which the region can be analyzed both over time and in comparison with other parts of the world. The first half of the course examines the political history of the region, with particular reference to how policies and practices of the Soviet state shaped the former republics of Soviet Central Asia. The second half turns to special topics at the center of the region's political and social life today. Coverage of these topics—which include democratization, Islam and the politics of counter-insurgency, women and definitions of the public sphere, the politics of nation-building, and international security—will involve light reading from other regions to provide comparative perspective.

PROPAGANDA, RUSSIA, & THE WORLD INFORMATION WAR

Regional Institute 8753IA Call Number: 15415 Points: 3

Day/Time: M 10:00-11:50am **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Thomas Kent

This course is a highly current guide to the international information war, why propaganda and disinformation work, and how they can be fought. After an introduction to the philosophy of information – how people process it and whether there can in fact be multiple truths – the course looks in depth at the disinformation tactics that state and private actors use to advance their goals. The course then considers a broad range of techniques to combat false information – including the ethics and effectiveness of overt and covert counter-disinformation campaigns conducted by Western countries. The course draws heavily on information operations by Russia, but also considers other disinformation actors – as well as the impact of disinformation on the US, Europe, Africa and Latin America. It concludes with a discussion of the future of information and disinformation, with an emphasis on the promise and dangers of artificial intelligence.

Russia in the Mideast and the Land of Israel, 1774 until Today

Regional Institute 6728IA Call Number: 17179 Points: 3

Day/Time: Th 3:10-5:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Jonathan Dekel-Chen

Scholars, practitioners and observers of the past and present of international relations in and around the Middle East recognize the importance of foreign involvement in the politics of the region. Among those major foreign powers who have intervened in the Middle East regularly throughout the modern period, Russia stands among the most significant but often the least understood. This odd dichotomy of power versus recognition has existed since the last quarter of the 18th century.

This course provides a wide historical framework for understanding the role Russia has played throughout the Middle East in the modern period, with a particular focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict since the First World War, when the newly established League of Nations approving a British Mandate for Palestine. By design, that decision promised to set the stage for eventual sovereignty for both Jews and Palestinians.

We will study the continuity and changes in the ideologies, policies, actions and impacts of Russia's successive regimes in this region starting in 1774, when the Russian Empire signed a foundational treaty with the Ottoman Empire, giving it for the first time a diplomatic and physical foothold in the Holy Land.

Through analysis of documents from the period, together with a wide variety of secondary sources from different sides of international interactions and conflicts, this course will analyze how Russia's practice of foreign policy in the region evolved as its regime transitioned from an imperial autocracy to a revolutionary socialist state in 1917, to a short-lived democratic experiment in 1991, and finally to an illiberal democracy with the rise of Vladimir Putin.

Russian/Eurasian/Eastern European Regional Studies

M.A. THESIS I

Russian, Eurasian, E. Europe Regional GR6998 Call Number: 14812 Points: 1

Day/Time: F 10:10am-12:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Instructor: Elise Giuliano

M.A. THESIS II

Russian, Eurasian, E. Europe Regional GR6999 Call Number: 14813 Points: 2

Instructor: Elise Giuliano

LEGACIES OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE SOVIET UNION

Russian, Eurasian, E. Europe Regional GR8445 Call Number: 14811 Points: 4

Day/Time: W 4:10-6:00pm **Location:** To be announced

Notes: Instructor permission required for non-MARS-REERS students

Instructor: Elise Giuliano

This intensive course offers an introduction to multiple disciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches to the major issues defining the emergence, persistence, and transformation of the countries that once comprised the Soviet bloc. The course explores the history, politics, economies, societies, and political cultures of Russia, the non-Russian republics of the former USSR, and East Central Europe, focusing on the conceptual, methodological, and theoretical developments employed by Soviet studies in North America and related disciplines. It also critically interrogates the enduring relevance and problems posed by the widespread use of the term “Soviet legacy” in reference to contemporary features and challenges faced by the region.

The intensive nature of this course is reflected in two ways- preparation and focus. First, the course carries a substantial reading load designed to inform and prepare students for the course sessions. These assignments will mostly be academic readings, but may also include short videos, news articles, and digital archival materials. In order to use our time together productively, the lectures and discussion will build upon, not review, the assignments for the session. Each session typically will be split into 2 segments, roughly of 55-60 minutes each. Many of these segments will be taught by guest lecturers who will give 30 mins presentations on their topic and then field questions. During our limited time for Q&A students should ask single, concise questions.

Russian

Russian Through Music

Russian GU4127 Call Number: 14257 **Points:** 3

Day/Time: MW 1:10-2:25pm **Location:** To be announced

Notes: Completion of UN3101 or instructor permission required

Instructor: Marina Tsylna

If you have a passion for music, like listening to music, or simply want to explore the realm of Russian melodies, this course is made for you. In the class, we'll focus on the development and strengthening of “four language skills”: speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Russian. You will learn to analyze and interpret lyrics, compare and contrast music across generations, discuss the values of a certain generation of people, and argue the popularity of music genres in specific time periods. Beyond linguistic proficiency, the course will immerse you in a comprehensive exploration of common knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, cultural traditions, and behavioral patterns unique to the people of Russia.

FOURTH-YEAR RUSSIAN I

Russian GU4342 Call Number: 14252 **Points:** 4

Day/Time: MWF 2:40-3:55pm **Location:** To be announced

Notes: UN 3101 and UN3102, or placement test required

Instructor: Tatiana Mikhailova

Systematic study of problems in Russian syntax; written exercises, translations into Russian, and compositions. Conducted entirely in Russian.

OLD RUSSIAN LITERATURE

Russian GR6014 Call Number: 10747 **Points:** 4
Day/Time: T 4:10-6:00pm **Location:** To be announced
Instructors: Valentina Izmirlieva

Ukrainian

CREATING IDENTITY- CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN CULTURE

Ukrainian GU4054 Call Number: 14073 **Points:** 3
Day/Time: TR 1:10-2:25pm **Location:** To be announced
Instructor: Mark R. Andryczyk

This course is organized around a number of thematic centers or modules. Each is focused on stylistic peculiarities typical of a given functional style of the Ukrainian language. Each is designed to assist the student in acquiring an active command of lexical, grammatical, discourse, and stylistic traits that distinguish one style from the others and actively using them in real-life communicative settings in contemporary Ukraine. The styles include literary fiction, scholarly prose, and journalism, both printed and broadcast.

AGENT OF CHANGE: UKRAINIAN ART BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS

Ukrainian GU4121 Call Number: 15416 **Points:** 3
Day/Time: M 2:10-4:00pm **Location:** To be announced
Instructor: Olena Martynyuk

The course will trace the appearance of the avant-garde on the territory of the Russian Empire with a focus on Ukrainian art as compared to Russian. Examining the art aspiring not only to reflect but to alter the reality originating both in the center and the periphery, the class will explore the array of strategies employed by art for that end. The foundational theories of avant-garde, non-conformism, and dissident art will be studied alongside the most celebrated and influential examples of innovative and radical art from the region. Beginning with socially minded realist practices, the class will consider the impact of the collapse of the Russian and then Soviet Empires on art and reflect on how the societal upheavals affect the understanding of the function and the definition of art. The appearance of Socialist Realism and the versions of opposition to it will be studied, from dissident undermining to neglect and escapism of the second avant-gardes, Ukrainian art of recent decades will be studied in the context of several revolutions (Granite, Orange, Euromaidan) that defined its contemporary history.

The class is offered for graduate and advanced undergraduate students. Knowledge of Russian or Ukrainian is not required.