Learning Objectives

Dedicated primarily to the study of the language, literature, and culture of modern Russia, the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures offers students the opportunity to witness the dramatic renaissance of one of the world’s major cultures as it redefines itself and its place in the world.

Learning objectives for the major in Russian:

The Russian language

Upon finishing a major in Russian, non-native speakers will be able to participate actively in most informal and some formal conversations; to handle the linguistic challenges presented by an unexpected turn of events in the context of a routine situation; to provide a short, structured argument in support of an opinion; and to read and discuss authentic contemporary texts dealing with topics in Russian culture, politics, and society.

Heritage speakers will be able to accomplish all of the objectives listed above. They will also be able to explain an opinion in detail and construct narratives in literate Russian, both orally and in writing.

A marked degree of fluency in the language of other cultures is an essential tool to developing an in-depth understanding of them. The ability to speak, listen, read, and write in other languages therefore is an imperative for students to have in this global age. You can learn more about basic language instruction at USC by clicking here.

Cultural knowledge
All students completing the Russian major will be able to differentiate and appraise the major periods in Russian cultural history (medieval Russia, Petrine Russia, Imperial Russia, Soviet Russia, post–Soviet Russia). They will be able to evaluate critically important texts from each period and to assess key theories of Russian cultural identity and interpretive controversies in the history of Russian culture.

Although the Russian major no longer concentrates exclusively on literature, we nonetheless expect our students to be able to analyze literary and historical texts (in Russian and in translation); to distinguish key periods and issues in Russian literary history (especially from the nineteenth century onward); and to have read a select list of works in the original Russian.

**Higher objectives**

In addition to these basic aims, we expect the very best of our students also to be able to produce extended discourse in Russian in which they provide structured arguments in support of their opinions. They will also be on their way toward consolidating their knowledge, not just of selected literary and other (historical, political, cultural) works in Russian, but of a representative bibliography of such works. The linguistic and cultural knowledge at this level is such that they would be well-prepared to enter graduate study in the field or use their knowledge in a professional setting (e.g., business, journalism) without extensive further training.