Proposal for a Russian Minor in the Department of Comparative Literature

Background to the proposal

The study of Russian at Cornell has a long history. The Department of Russian Literature, founded half a century ago, was preceded in the 1940s by a Department of Slavic Languages. Vladimir Nabokov taught Russian and European literature here for eleven years. When the Department of Russian (in its still later iteration) and the Russian Major were eliminated in 2010, the literature faculty and the Russian Language Program were incorporated into the Department of Comparative Literature. We hope to establish a Russian Minor within Comparative Literature, allowing interested students to concentrate in Russian language and some combination of literature and area studies.

Description of the Russian Minor

The Russian Minor in the Department of Comparative Literature is open to undergraduates in all seven colleges. The Minor allows students to explore an interest in Russian language, literature, and culture. Requirements for the Minor are proficiency in Russian language, and four non-language courses, as specified below.

language requirement

There are three ways to satisfy the requirement of proficiency in Russian:

1) Complete RUSSA 1121, 1103, 1122, and 1104 in the first year, and RUSSA 2203 and 2204 in the second year.

2) Complete RUSSA 1121 and 1122 in the first year, and RUSSA 1125, 1126, 2203, and 2204 in the second year.

3) (for those who place out of RUSSA 2204) Complete RUSSA 3305 or 3306 or 3308 or a Russian literature, history, or government course with reading in Russian. If the literature, history, or government course does not include reading in Russian, this can be done through a supplementary section, such as RUSSA 4491.

Russian language courses taken abroad or at American summer programs may be counted towards this requirement if they are aimed at achieving similar proficiency levels.

non-language courses

At least two of the four non-language courses must be in Russian literature, and at least one must have reading in Russian. (Reading courses offered by the Russian Language Program cannot be counted towards any portion of the literature requirement.) The two remaining courses may be in Russian literature, or students may choose Russia-related courses in other departments, for example, Linguistics, History, and Government.

For further information about the minor, please consult Nancy Pollak in the Department of Comparative Literature (pollak@cornell.edu).