

Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

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GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures currently offers courses of study leading to the M.A. and Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures, with emphasis placed on cultural and interdisciplinary studies and study in more than one Slavic language and literature.

Graduate minors or certificates are available in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies; Media and Cinema Studies; the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory; Gender and Women's Studies; Jewish Studies, and others.

THE DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDY (DGS)

Upon entering the program, each new student should meet immediately and then as needed with the DGS, who is responsible for making recommendations on the student's curriculum and other matters and will monitor the student's academic progress. The DGS acts as the student's principal advisor throughout the M.A. Program, and students should continue to consult with the DGS about coursework and requirements, progress toward degree, scheduling preliminary exams, and the like, even once they have selected a main PhD advisor / dissertation director. The DGS will address issues of concern to the student and, when necessary, will consult with other faculty or administrators about those issues. Student complaints and other problems are normally first handled by the DGS, who will then advise a course of action.

As they move through the program, students are also strongly encouraged to consult faculty in their areas of interest, both in the department and in other units, as these professors are likely to serve on the student's exams and as members of their dissertation committees.

THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT

In consultation with the DGS and members of the Slavic faculty, the Head determines the appropriate level of financial support (fellowships, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and tuition and fee waivers) for each student. Students are encouraged to consult with the Head as they move through the program about fellowship, teaching, and research opportunities, as well as progress toward degree.

GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORING

Slavic Department graduate faculty are committed to mentoring and assisting graduate students at every stage of their studies. In providing mentorship, faculty are guided by the Mentoring Guidelines issued by the Graduate College: <https://grad.illinois.edu/faculty/mentoring>

Graduate faculty will foster the development of excellence in every graduate student.

In relations with students, graduate faculty will be candid, fair, and committed to the students' welfare and progress.

Graduate faculty will conscientiously supervise, encourage, and support students in their academic endeavors and assist them in securing research support and seeking professional employment.

Graduate faculty will not discriminate among graduate students on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, ethnic background, disability, religion, national origin, or any other factor unrelated to competence or performance.

Graduate faculty will advise students concerning the ethics of the profession, encourage the practice of research and publication consistent with ethical standards, and help students avoid ethically questionable projects.

Graduate faculty will advise students about career opportunities and implications associated with their participation in particular research projects or degree programs.

Graduate faculty will strive to enhance the educational value of teaching and research assistantships of the students under their supervision.

Graduate faculty will be objective in the evaluation of research and academic performance and will communicate that evaluation fully and honestly to their students. Graduate faculty will report accurately on the competence of students to other professionals who require such evaluations.

Graduate faculty will not permit personal animosities or intellectual differences with colleagues to impede student access to those colleagues or interfere with students' research or progress toward a degree.

When engaged in teaching, research, or supervision, graduate faculty will recognize the power they hold and will avoid engaging in conduct that exploits or demeans students or that could be construed as an abuse of that power.

Graduate faculty are responsible for all phases of graduate education and will be accessible to students who are under their guidance.

MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.)

OVERVIEW

The M.A. degree program offers a comprehensive course of study in Russian literature, language, and culture. A required set of courses (in advanced language, theory and methodology, and history) provides the core of foundational knowledge in the discipline. M.A. students are then free to choose literature courses offered by the Slavic department at both the 500- and the 400-levels, plus courses of related interest that are offered by other departments at UIUC, such as the Program in Comparative and World Literature, the History Department, the English Department, and the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center, among others. The M.A. program is generally four semesters long and culminates in an M.A. written exam.

The degree program is designed for students who wish to continue to the Ph.D. in Slavic; however, the program's concentration on Russian language, literature, and culture makes it possible for students to pursue an M.A. degree only. Other concentrations and individualized programs may be arranged in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and relevant faculty.

An M.A. or equivalent is required for admission at the doctoral level.

ADMISSIONS

The Graduate College considers for admission only those applicants who hold, or will be granted at the end of the current academic year, a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college in the United States or a comparable degree from a recognized institution of higher learning abroad. A grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (A=4.0), or comparable GPA for an international applicant, for the last two years of undergraduate study is a minimum requirement for admission.

GRE scores are not required for admission, but are highly recommended for all students who would like to be considered for fellowship support.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores are required for applicants whose native language is not English (please see the Graduate College handbook for exemptions.) After enrolling, students may also be required to take additional English language courses in the Division of English as an International Language.

Students applying to the Department are expected, in addition to the Graduate College requirements, to have had a minimum of three (preferably four) years of college-level Russian, or comparable proficiency, as well as course work in Russian literature. If a student plans to specialize in a language and literature other than Russian, comparable coursework and language levels are expected.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Completion of a minimum 32 hours of graduate course work as required by the Graduate College. At least 20 hours must be for courses in the department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Required courses must include:

- *RUSS 501 – Russian for Graduate Students I
(in consultation with the DGS may be replaced by another 500-level course)
- *RUSS 502 – Russian for Graduate Students II
(in consultation with the DGS may be replaced by another 500-level course)
- *SLAV 576 – Methods in Slavic Grad Studies
- *HIST 560 – Problems in Russian History or
HIST 551A – Problems in East European History or
REES 550 – Seminar in Russian and East European Studies, or
IS 461 – Russian, East European, and Eurasian Bibliography & Research Methods,
or
another course approved by the DGS
- *Two of four graduate-level survey courses on 19th & 20-21st century (RUSS 511, 512, 513, 514; may be taken out of chronological order), or equivalent 400- or 500-level thematic/author courses, as approved by the DGS.

Students who plan to continue on to the Ph.D. are strongly encouraged to satisfy one of the two language requirements (a second Slavic-area language or a research language) at the M.A. level. These requirements can be fulfilled through coursework or a translation examination.

NORMAL LOAD

Students are expected to take three (3) graduate level courses, plus language courses. While exceptions may be made on an individual basis, graduate students should be careful to make sure that they are maintaining a sufficient course load at all times to guarantee eligibility for fellowships, stipends, visa, etc. International students should note that some courses (such as language courses) *do not count* for computing loads for visa eligibility. In all cases, language work is considered extra, in addition to a student's normal load of graduate courses.

M.A. EXAMINATIONS

M.A. COMMITTEE

The M.A. Committee, which is generally the same as the department's Graduate Studies Committee, consists of three faculty members, including the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS),

who serves as the Committee Chair. The DGS is responsible for collecting questions from members of the department, while the exam is graded by the three members of the Committee.

M.A. WRITTEN EXAMINATION

The series of written examinations for the M.A. degree, generally scheduled in the fourth semester, consists of two examinations of four hours each, designed to test the student's ability to synthesize the knowledge gained through course work and independent reading. The first examination covers nineteenth-century Russian literature, and the second examination covers twentieth- and twenty-first-century Russian literature. The Master's reading list serves as a guide for preparation for the exams and may be individually amended in consultation with the DGS. For concentrations other than Russian language, literature, and culture, early consultation and planning of a reading list and exam topics with the DGS and relevant faculty is necessary.

The reading lists, as well as sample exam questions and a guide to approaching exams, are available on the departmental website.

The student is responsible for scheduling each exam at least 4 weeks in advance of the exam date, using a scheduling form available through Graduate Services. Whenever possible, exams should be scheduled during the Fall or Spring semesters; Summer exams will be scheduled only for exceptional circumstances.

The grading of examinations for the degree is on a high pass/pass/low pass/fail basis. The exam will be graded by the end of two weeks following the exam. In case of a failure of any part of the examination, the committee will determine whether the student shall be allowed to repeat a part or the whole of the exam.

Continuation towards the Ph.D. is determined by a combination of the following factors: the results of the exams, the student's overall academic performance, including performance in graduate seminars, good standing in the program, progress to a degree, language proficiency, and teaching effectiveness.

If a student fails one or both the M.A. examinations, the student is given one more chance to take the examination(s) in question. A second failure results in no degree being granted and dismissal from the Program.

TERMINAL M.A. DEGREE

A student may elect to receive a terminal M.A. Otherwise, it is assumed that the student wishes to be considered for admission to the Ph.D. Program.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.)

OVERVIEW

The Ph.D. degree program in Slavic Languages and Literatures is characterized by an open structure, allowing students to design an individualized program of study, based on their interests and in consultation with the graduate advisor. A wide range of opportunities for individual specialization includes the languages, literatures and cultures of Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic, Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Bulgaria, as well as Yiddish. Students may complement their coursework in language and literature with studies in critical theory, comparative literature, philosophy, cinema and related media, history, political science, and the visual and performing arts. Students may also choose to complete a graduate minor or a graduate certificate in another program, such as: Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies; Global Studies; European Union Studies; Jewish Culture and Society; Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies; Queer Studies; Gender & Women's Studies; Cinema Studies; Environmental Sustainability; Translation Studies; or the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory (among others).

ADMISSIONS

Students are admitted to the Ph.D. program after the successful completion of an M.A. degree in Slavic studies or a related field. Ph.D. students design a program of study that includes a major field in one Slavic-area literature (any national literature currently offered by the department), study in a second Slavic or regional language, and a minor field.

GRE scores are not required for admission to the PhD, but are highly recommended for all new students who would like to be considered for fellowship support.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores are required for new applicants whose native language is not English (please see the Graduate College handbook for exemptions.) After enrolling, students may also be required to take additional English language courses in the Division of English as an International Language.

Students applying to the Department are expected, in addition to the Graduate College requirements, to have had a minimum of four years of college-level Russian, or comparable proficiency, as well as course work in Russian literature. If a student plans to specialize in a language and literature other than Russian, comparable coursework and language levels are expected.

THE PROGRAM

Once admitted to the Ph.D. Program, the student must maintain a 3.5 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) and must fulfill the general requirements of the Graduate College. Every student's academic progress will be reviewed annually by the faculty. Satisfactory progress is expected. Absent that progress, the faculty may recommend dismissal from the Program and the University.

The DGS continues as the principal advisor of the student in the Ph.D. Program through the end of the second semester in residence. At this point (and no later than their last semester of coursework) the student should choose a faculty advisor who will oversee their PhD exams and serve as the dissertation director. The faculty advisor will normally oversee the student's progress through the remainder of the coursework, the preliminary examinations, and the dissertation itself. The advisor is selected in consultation with the DGS and any changes to the faculty advisor or members of the exam or dissertation committees should be made in consultation with the DGS.

NORMAL LOAD

Students are normally expected to take three (3) graduate level courses, plus language courses. While exceptions may be made on an individual basis, graduate students should be careful to make sure that they are maintaining a sufficient course load at all times to guarantee eligibility for fellowships, stipends, visa, etc. International students should note that some courses (such as language courses) *do not count* for computing loads for visa eligibility. In all cases, language work is considered extra, in addition to a student's normal load of graduate courses.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Completion of at least 32 hours of graduate course work beyond the requirements for the M.A. degree. 20 hours must be in graduate-level courses in the major field, completed in the Slavic department. 12-16 hours must be in graduate-level courses in a minor field (three courses in a single area, or two courses each in two distinct areas) and may be completed outside the department.

REQUIRED COURSES

SLAV 576 – Methods in Grad Study (if not taken during M.A. program)

Four-semester sequence of survey courses on the 19th & 20-21st centuries (RUSS 511, 512, 513, 514, which may be taken out of chronological order), or equivalent thematic/author courses, as approved by the DGS.

Any graduate-level course currently offered by the department (500-level, but 400-level may be substituted where appropriate)

*SLAV 577 – Slavic Languages Pedagogy Seminar
(2 credit hour course, when offered; students may take the course twice)

*SLAV 591 – Professionalization Seminar (may be fulfilled by CWL 582: Proseminar; students may take the course twice)

By the end of their PhD coursework, students should have taken at least one course with each with the faculty in the program and gained the broadest possible perspective on the field, regardless of whether or not a given course falls within the student's area of specialization or current research interest. This helps position you for a job in the field.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Demonstration of knowledge of a second Slavic or regional language and a research language (French, German, or another language chosen in consultation with the graduate advisor) is required before students are advanced to the preliminary examination. The regional language requirement can be satisfied through four semesters of language study or the successful completion of a translation examination. The research language requirement can be satisfied by completion of FR 500 and 501 or GER 500 and 501, the equivalent courses in another language, or a translation exam.

CERTIFICATES AND GRADUATE MINORS

The acquisition of a graduate minor or certificate relevant to the student's professional interests is encouraged. The requirements for obtaining those certificates or graduate minors are set by the academic unit in question. Work done to fulfill those requirements will count toward the minor field requirement for the Ph.D.

THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

PH.D. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

The Ph.D. preliminary examination committee generally consists of four faculty members, three of whom must be members of the Slavic department. (Please see the Graduate College requirements for details on how the Ph.D. committee should be constituted.) All members of the committee prepare and read the written examinations and pose questions at the oral examinations.

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

The preliminary written examinations consist of two four-hour exams, covering the student's major and minor fields, focusing on the area of specialization to be pursued in the dissertation. The norm for the Ph.D. written exams shall be in the range of one or two questions to be answered in four hours. For any section on the exam, there will normally be a choice of questions from which the examinee selects one to answer. The chair of the examination committee and the committee have discretion on this matter. The examinations are comprehensive, testing the student's critical abilities and familiarity with subject matter and methodology. The exams serve

to indicate whether the student has adequate preparation and ability to carry out independent scholarly research and teaching.

1st. The major field examination focuses on the student's area of specialization and includes literature / film / visual arts, critical theory, and secondary source materials that pertain to but also expand on the student's dissertation topic. Students are expected to include coverage of the field that goes beyond their particular research topic. Thus, a specialization in Silver Age poetry, for example, would include 19C and 20C Russian poetry, as well as literary theory and secondary sources on specific poets and movements. The field should be defined in consultation with the Ph.D. examination committee. This exam is intended to test both the student's comprehensive knowledge and prepare them for writing their dissertation proposal.

2nd. The minor field examination focuses on an area of research supplementary to the student's major area of concentration. Possible minor fields include but are not limited to study in another Slavic or regional literature and culture, including Yiddish-language literature; Jewish studies; the visual and performing arts; critical theory; gender studies; cinema and related media; philosophy; history. This exam is intended to situate the student's comprehensive knowledge and specialization within the broader framework of comparative or theoretical studies. Coursework in the minor field may be fulfilled by a graduate minor / certificate from another unit, but the minor field exam should be tailored to Slavic studies.

PROCEDURE

A Ph.D. examination committee is established in consultation with the main faculty advisor who will be directing your Ph.D. dissertation. This faculty advisor will chair the Ph.D. committee and will be responsible for assembling the exam with input from the committee. The Ph.D. exam committee and the Ph.D. dissertation committee will largely overlap, but might not include exactly the same members. In some rare cases, the chair of the Ph.D. committee will be different from the dissertation director.

A reading list for each examination is established by the student in consultation with the appropriate members of the Ph.D. preliminary examination committee. The student is responsible for scheduling each exam at least 4 weeks in advance of the date of the exam (a scheduling form available through Graduate Services). Whenever possible, exams should be scheduled during the Fall or Spring semesters; Summer exams will be scheduled only for exceptional circumstances. The finalized reading list for each exam should be sent to the entire committee at least 4 weeks before the exam's date.

The grading of written examinations is on a high pass/ pass/ low pass/ fail basis. A guide to approaching exam questions is available on the departmental website. The exam will be graded by the end of two weeks following the exam. In case of a failure on a part of the examination, the committee will decide whether the student shall be permitted to repeat that part, but no part may be repeated more than once. In the case of poor performance on the exam more generally,

the committee may decide to test the material concerned further during the oral prospectus defense.

PH.D. DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Ph.D. dissertation committee generally consists of four faculty members, one of whom will direct the dissertation. Two of the members must be Slavic department faculty and at least one an outside member. (Please see the Graduate College requirements for details on how the Ph.D. committee should be constituted.) This committee may be the same as the Ph.D. preliminary exam committee.

DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS DEFENSE

Following the completion of written exams, the student meets with the Ph.D. dissertation committee to examine the dissertation prospectus. The prospectus is a dissertation proposal 10-15 pages in length, including a statement of purpose and method, contribution to the field, a chapter outline, and a bibliography. A more detailed guide to writing a dissertation prospectus is available on the departmental website. At least two weeks in advance of the meeting and with the approval of the dissertation advisor, the student should present the Ph.D. dissertation committee with a complete prospectus. The defense is two hours long and serves to examine the scholarly value of the proposal and to refine the project. The committee may also follow up on the written exams to further test the student's knowledge of the national literature and the related fields of specialization. Upon successful completion of the prospectus defense, the student is admitted to candidacy for the thesis stage.

THE DISSERTATION

PH.D. DISSERTATION

The dissertation is a significant work of original scholarship of approximately 200–300 pages (plus complete bibliography) that engages a scholarly tradition and advances knowledge and/or interpretation in the field. The dissertation should be on a topic that is likely to be accepted for publication as a book by a university press. The dissertation is written in close consultation with the dissertation advisor, who will schedule regular meetings with the student and assist in setting goals and deadlines for work on the dissertation. Students are encouraged to pursue funding for dissertation research abroad.

WRITING PROCESS

Students are expected to meet regularly with the dissertation director (and, as needed, with members of the Ph.D. dissertation committee) and to submit completed chapter drafts for feedback at regular intervals. The dissertation director will meet with the student and provide substantial feedback on each chapter in a timely manner, as well as on the dissertation as a whole as

it progresses, with the expectation that each chapter will be revised at least once before final submission. As a rule, other members of the dissertation committee will only read chapters once they have undergone substantial revision; however, students are encouraged to solicit feedback on their chapters-in-progress from faculty in their areas of specialization.

Students who have made substantial progress on the dissertation may request, in consultation with their dissertation advisor, a meeting of the entire dissertation committee, to be conducted on the model of a dissertation defense with the goal of assessing the work to date and jointly defining the best path to successful completion of the dissertation.

PH.D. ORAL DEFENSE

The Ph.D. final examination consists of the public defense of the completed dissertation. Students are responsible for scheduling the defense with Graduate Services, and in consultation with all members of the committee. The dissertation, as approved by the dissertation advisor, must be made available to each member of the Ph.D. committee at least four weeks before the final examination is to take place. The final version of the dissertation, incorporating any changes deemed necessary by the committee, must conform to all requirements of the Graduate College.

DEPARTMENTAL EXPECTATIONS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate Students in both the MA and the PhD program are expected to communicate with their advisors regularly (frequency to be determined in consultation with the director and/or advisors), and as particular need arises. Students should consult with faculty mentors and the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) when planning their coursework and preparing and scheduling exams.

Students in the PhD program and doctoral candidates, in particular, are expected to communicate their dissertation progress or any significant obstacles to that progress in a timely manner to their advisors and/or the DGS. Dissertation directors and members of doctoral committees should be given sufficient time in order to be able to closely read and comment on any draft chapters, annotated bibliographies, or prospectuses submitted (usually four weeks). In order for advisors and members of the committee to provide the most helpful feedback, dissertation chapters should be submitted regularly for review. In return, students can expect their chapters to be read and detailed feedback provided by faculty members in a timely manner.

Students should also be in touch with their dissertation directors well ahead of deadlines (i.e. weeks, not days) with requests for letters of recommendation for internal or external fellowships, job applications, and similar documentation. This applies as well to other members of the committee. In order to provide the best possible letters of recommendation, sufficient lead time is required. Letter writers should also be provided with application documents (statement of purpose, cover letter, etc.) at least in draft form, so that letters can be crafted to support the proposal or application. In return, students can expect thoughtful and detailed advocacy for their applications in letters submitted on time to committees.

Finally, all graduate students – MA, PhD-in-residence, and ABD candidates – are required to submit their annual self-evaluations to the DGS in a timely manner. Advisors and dissertation directors will provide detailed feedback on the self-evaluations and the student’s/candidate’s overall progress, including likely sources of funding (such as course instructorships, TA- and RA-ships, departmental fellowships, and any other relevant sources for which the student is considered); students can expect this feedback to come early in the summer. Students should make all reasonable attempts to resolve issues with arising from grading, incomplete work, or other matters of academic standards and discipline that may affect their standing, with the instructor or instructors involved, and with the DGS and the Department Head where relevant/as needed.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

All graduate students may use the Graduate College Grievance Policy: <https://grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/2/chapter9/academic-conflict#GraduateCollegePolicy> to file a grievance.

HARASSMENT

The Department is dedicated to being a harassment-free environment, regardless of gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, nationality, ethnicity, race, or religion.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The Department follows the University’s guidelines on sexual misconduct and retaliation against any person who reports or discloses a violation, or who files a complaint, and/or who otherwise participates in an investigation, proceeding, complaint, or hearing under this policy. Detailed information on the University’s sexual misconduct policies can be found here: <https://wecare.illinois.edu/policies/campus/>

Included on this page is information pertaining to misconduct policies and addressing sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment:

- Sexual Misconduct Policy (via **Campus Administrative Manual** and via **Student Code**)
- Rights and Options of Students Who Have Experienced Sexual Misconduct
- Non-Exclusive List of Potential Interim/Protective Measures and Corrective Action Remedies
- Statement on Medical Amnesty and Good Samaritan Policy
- Student Conduct Protocol for Allegations of Sexual Misconduct, Including Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Sexual Exploitation, Stalking, Dating Violence, and Domestic Violence
- Non-Exclusive List of Possible Sanctions/Actions/Outcomes of the Student Disciplinary Process
- Non-Exclusive List of Possible Sanctions/Outcomes for Employees Found In Violation of the Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Disciplinary Procedures for Employees – Procedures for Addressing Discrimination and Harassment (pdf)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please see the Department's website:

<https://slavic.illinois.edu/academics/slavic-graduate-studies>

Please contact either the DGS or the Head:

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