

## Russian 420: Pre-Revolutionary Russian Life and Culture (Fall 2017)

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Office: B-467 or B-302 Wells Hall  
Wells A308 / MWF 3:00-3:50

Office hours: M 11:15-12:15 / W 1:45-2:45 and by appointment (best to email me and arrange)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS.** RUS 420 is an advanced Russian language course that aims to place the language learning in a Russian cultural context. The main focus remains reviewing and learning Russian, but we will also introduce some of the basic concepts of traditional Russian culture and discuss them in Russian. We will examine texts about historical periods, films on selected cultural subjects, literary texts that examine the past, and also primary sources when possible. The time span covered by the course is from the start of the Russian state in 862 until the revolutions of 1917.

**COURSE MATERIALS.** This semester we will work mostly from course materials developed by the instructor. Instead of purchasing textbooks, you agree to bring copies of all relevant materials to each class meeting. In addition, you should own a good Russian dictionary. I recommend Katzner or the larger Oxford. Please ask me about any other dictionaries.

1. You might consider buying a copy of our film, «Иван Васильевич меняет профессию».
2. All other materials will be handed out in class or on our D2L site. All of our reading texts and the film materials are posted on the D2L site. YOU are responsible for bringing copies, electronic or printed, of these materials to class.

### YOUR GRADE.

1. Attendance	10%	4. Short Essays	10%
2. Weekly quizzes	15%	5. Tests	20%
3. Homework	25%	6. Final Exam	20%

### GRADING SCALE:

92-100 = 4.0	76-81 = 2.5	60-64 = 1.0
87-91 = 3.5	70-75 = 2.0	00-59 = 0.0
82-86 = 3.0	65-69 = 1.5	

### GRADING CRITERIA

1. ATTENDANCE (10%). Please come to class on time and prepared to participate. Telling me after the fact does not excuse an absence. Here is how this portion of your grade will be determined:

#### Absences:

0-2	4.0	4-5	3.0	7-8	2.0
3	3.5	6	2.5	9+	0.0

2. WEEKLY QUIZZES (15%). Almost every week there will be a quiz on a defined set of material (a list of words, a grammatical construction). Exactly what will be on the quiz will be announced in class.

3. HOMEWORK (25%). As in any class, completing the homework is an essential part of making progress. Homework will be assigned for every class. Homework that is one (class) day late will

receive half credit; after that, **no credit** (but I will still gladly look at them, as homework material tends to repeat on tests). If at any point you are unsure what the assignment is, ask!

4. **SHORT ESSAYS (10%).** You will be assigned many short essays of 1-2 paragraph length, there will be one due almost every day.

5. **TESTS (20%).** In the course of the semester we will have two or three larger tests. These will emphasize the grammar covered in class, but will also include the cultural content and the film. I will announce in class what will be on the tests.

6. **FINAL EXAM (20%).** The final exam will have a written and oral component. The final exam is currently scheduled for Monday, December 11 from 3-5pm.

**COMMUNICATION:** From time to time I will send messages and materials to the class by email (through the Registrar's list). Please make sure I have your correct email address. Check your email regularly.

**RUSSIAN CLUB:** We encourage you to participate in Russian Club activities. They will give you a chance to meet other students of Russian, learn more about Russian culture, and practice your Russian! Announcements will be made in class.

**STUDY ABROAD:** If you would like to participate in the MSU Volgograd program, please let me know as soon as possible.

**Google translate / academic honesty / Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be dealt with as such in this course. Using Google Translate or any such program to produce Russian that you then turn in as your own work is plagiarism! Familiarize yourself with the MSU Ombudsman's resources on plagiarism:

<http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/plagiarism.html>

**RUSSIA FILM SERIES:** Every semester the Russian program hosts a series of Russian films, which are shown approximately every other week. Attendance at a film can erase one class absence; **in order to receive** this credit you must hand me a short essay about the film, which must include a brief (3-4 sentences ok) plot summary **IN RUSSIAN** of the film and your opinion of the film: did you like it or not and why? (мне понравился фильм «» потому что...). Films will be announced in class.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.** If you have any sort of disability that may prevent you from completing the course requirements, please contact me as soon as possible so we can make proper arrangements.

**Proficiency testing.** This year the Russian program is participating in a research program that will require you to twice respond to some questions online (roughly weeks 7 and 14). These assignments will count as homework, and more details will follow.

**Spartan Honor Code:** As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor in ownership is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.