



SPUTNIK



DEPARTMENT OF
SLAVIC LANGUAGES &
LITERATURES

annual freshman publication
issue 2, summer 2015

What Is Our Department?

It is:

- a diverse group of scholars and students;
- language programs designed for non-heritage and heritage learners;
- exciting lecture series and roundtables on a broad variety of cultural and political topics;
- talent shows, concerts, poetry readings, undergraduate research conferences;
- student trips, Russian conversation hour (Russian Tea), family atmosphere, and *much more!*

Last Year at a Glance

Scott Levy of Ohio State U. led a seminar on “Silk Roads, Real and Imagined: Trade, State and Society in Early Modern Central Asia”; **Alexander Genis** spoke on “Spare Russia: Russian Emigration in Contemporary Political Context”; **Igor Munteanu**, the Moldovan Ambassador, gave a lecture titled “Competing Narratives in Eastern Europe: Between the EU and Russia”; Ambassador **Michael McFaul** gave a talk on “Confronting Putin’s Russia: Long-Term Economic and Foreign Policy Implications”; **Claire Kaiser** and **Alex Hazanov**, PhD candidates at Upenn, organized a seminar on “New Perspectives on the Soviet Union under Late Socialism”. **Rosamund Bartlett**, a prominent translator, explored the translation history of *Anna Karenina* in “The Other Stories in Anna Karenina: A Translator’s Perspective” talk. Professor **Basile Baudetz**, Universite Paris-Sorbonne, gave a lecture titled “The Decor of an Opera Built Yesterday”: Saint-Petersburg’s River Panorama.

Our annual graduate student colloquium, *Slavics without Borders*, attracted international student participation. *Slavic Bazaar*, our annual undergraduate research conference, covered topics ranging from Dostoevsky to Platonov and sparked a lively discussion.

Perry World House in cooperation with the Slavic Languages Department and Penn Arts and Sciences brought the artists and political activists known as **Pussy Riot** to Upenn campus. Their latest video “I Can’t Breathe” was screened, and a Q&A session followed. The event attracted over a thousand attendees.

Nadya Tolokonnikova and Masha Alekhina of Pussy Riot in a conversation with the Philadelphia audience, March 17, 2015



Our annual Slavic Symposium, titled “My Language - Your Ear” this year, brought together prominent Russian-speaking poets *Shamshad Abdullayev*, *Alexandr Skidan*, *Keti Chukhrov*, *Alexandra Petrov*, and *Polina Barskova*. With readings all over Philadelphia, poetry translation panels, and workshops, the Symposium was a vibrant 3-day event attended by a large number of academics, poets, students, and other fans of poetry.

As usual, we finish our intense year with a barbeque, as we have done for the past 12 years. The BBQ is a chance for the current and prospective Russian majors and minors, faculty, and staff to get to know each other better, relax, have a conversation, and enjoy the weather with a cold beverage and a freshly grilled burger in hand. Dr. Platt is our distinguished grill master, and this BBQ is the event we look forward to each year. Play your cards right, and you can be joining us for this event next May!



"The Gospel Circle of Vassily Polenov" film crew and Dr. Kevin Platt

We have also screened "#Babylon'13: Ukraine", a collection of short documentaries on the current state of Ukraine, "The Gospel Circle of Vassily Polenov", and "The Color of the Chameleon", a film based on a screenplay by Professor Vlad Todorov. Alumni of the Yale Russian Chorus performed Russian secular and liturgical music.

The end of every academic year brings a bittersweet event, the Champagne Reception for Graduating Russian Majors and Minors. We are happy to see our students graduate with a major or minor from our department, but it is also a parting that is less than sweet. Students and their family members, faculty, and staff get together and toast the end of the major undertaking that an undergraduate degree from Upenn is and celebrate the new beginning of a professional path.



Dr. Svetlana Korshunova, graduating student Igor Bazay, and his family members, May 17, 2015



Dr. Ilya Vinitsky and graduating students, Avramit Katsnelson and Olivia Route, May 17, 2015



Dr. Verkholtantsev, graduating student Alexander Droznin-Izrael, and his parents, May 17, 2015



Twice a year last year, our students got together on the College Green to play chess with each other. The event draws quite a crowd, and it is a lot of fun for the players and observers.

On March 28, 2015, a group of UPenn Russian Heritage Speakers Program alumni met in New York's Onegin Restaurant for the annual dinner. This dinner is a great opportunity for our alums and faculty in the area to meet, catch up, and discuss future plans. During this meet, our alumni decided to create a fund that would sponsor various student academic endeavors related to their study of Russia and Eurasia.



Masha Jones, Inna Alexandrovich, Dr. Svetlana Korshunova, Artiom Mariychin, Serge Morrell, Greg Slavin, Prof. Ilya Vinitsky, Irina Denisenko, John Summitt, Julia Kulbitskaya, and Salam Djamalov

FACULTY NEWSFLASH

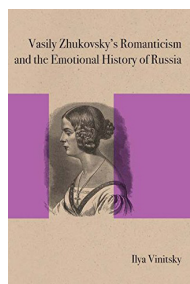


Dr. Steiner, Dr. Platt, and a friend,
May 2015

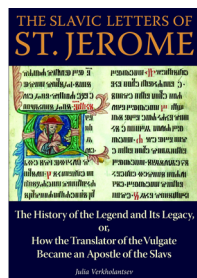
After many decades of teaching, Dr. Peter Steiner has retired this May. The department honored Dr. Steiner by getting together for a retirement dinner. Dr. Steiner will continue teaching as Professor Emeritus. His expertise in the area of Russian literature, literary theory, and formalism will most certainly be appreciated by students and colleagues.

FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Vasily Zhukovsky's Romanticism and the Emotional History of Russia
by Ilya Vinitsky
Northwestern University Press,
May 2015



The Slavic Letters of St. Jerome: The History of the Legend and Its Legacy, or, How the Translator of the Vulgate Became an Apostle of the Slavs
by Julia Verkholtantsev
Northern Illinois University Press,
September 2014



Kevin M.F. Platt received Penn Global Engagement Fund, ARCHES Grant for collaborative programs with European University, St. Petersburg.

Svetlana Korshunova has completed her online reader for Russian Heritage Students "The Russian Colloquy" (Penn Language Center Teaching Innovation Grant).

Maria Alley received Penn Language Center Teaching Innovation Grant for creating Canvas-based pedagogical activities for Elementary Russian program.

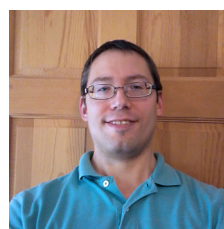
NEW FACULTY



We are proud to announce that Professor Mitchell Orenstein, a prominent scholar, has joined our department. Dr. Orenstein's a scholar of international politics focusing on the political economy of transition in Central and Eastern Europe, pension

privatization worldwide, and the role of policy paradigms in economic reform.

With this addition to our faculty, our department's focus expands and shifts more towards political science and area studies. This fall semester, Dr. Orenstein will teach a brand new course: **Russia and Eastern Europe in International Affairs** [RUSS123.401]



Tom Dolack received a PhD in comparative literature from the University of Oregon in 2007. He has published articles on a range of topics including Russian Petrarchism and cognitive approaches to Pushkin. His current work examines the ethical implications of intertextuality in the work of Osip Mandelstam.

This coming fall, Dr. Dolack will teach **RUSS222: Imagining Asia: Russia and the East**. This course spans the Caucasus, Central Asia, Iran, and Turkey, analyzing how Russian writers connected the East to Russian identity over a number of artistic periods.



Dr. Peeney earned her Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2010. She is interested in language pedagogy, early twentieth-century Modernism, and creative writing.

Meet Our Faculty:

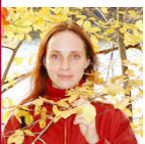


Ilya Vinitsky, Professor, Department Chair. Dr. Vinitsky's main fields of expertise are 18th- and 19th- century Russian literature, the history of emotions, and 19th- century intellectual and spiritual history. This academic year, Dr. Vinitsky will be on sabbatical.



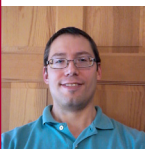
Maria Alley, Lecturer in Foreign Languages, Language Program Coordinator. Dr. Alley's interests include second language acquisition and language pedagogy, proficiency testing, and materials development. This fall semester, Dr. Alley will teach:

- RUSS001 Elementary Russian I
- RUSS003 Intermediate Russian I
- RUSS311 Advanced Russian Conversation and Composition I



Maria Bourlatskaya, Lecturer in Foreign Languages. Dr. Bourlatskaya specializes in teaching advanced Russian content-based courses for business professionals with the use of film and literature, as well as political and business materials. Her current research interest lies in

techniques for training business professionals to develop and assess cross-cultural competency. This fall semester, Dr. Boulatskaya will teach RUSS416: Business and Democracy in the New Russia.



Tom Dolack, Lecturer. He has published articles on a range of topics including Russian Petrarchism, cognitive approaches to Pushkin, and the translation work of several Modernist poets. This fall semester, Dr. Dolack will teach:

- RUSS145: Russian Literature to the 1870's
- RUSS201: Dostoevsky
- RUSS222: Russia and the East



Svetlana Korshunova, Lecturer in Foreign Languages, Heritage Speakers Program Coordinator. Dr. Korshunova's academic interests focus on issues of language and identity. This fall semester, Dr. Korshunova will teach:

- RUSS360 Russian for Heritage Speakers I
- RUSS455 The Living & the Dead: The Great Patriotic War in Russian Cultural Imagination



Original idea, content, and design by
Alina Yakubova, Administrative Coordinator



Mitchell Orenstein, Professor. Dr. Orenstein is a scholar of international politics focusing on the political economy of transition in Central and Eastern Europe. This fall semester, Dr. Orenstein will teach RUSS123: Russia and Eastern Europe in International Affairs.



Molly Peeney, Lecturer. Her interests are in language pedagogy, early twentieth-century Modernism, and creative writing. This fall semester, Dr. Peeney will teach:

- RUSS001 Elementary Russian I
- RUSS003 Intermediate Russian I
- RUSS220 Russia and the West



Kevin M. F. Platt, Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Term Professor in the Humanities, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Graduate Chair of the Comparative Literature Program. Dr. Platt works on representations of Russian history, Russian historiography, history and memory in Russia, Russian lyric poetry, and global post-Soviet Russian culture. This fall semester, Dr. Platt will teach:

- RUSS187: Portraits of Soviet Society
- RUSS250: Tarkovsky's Passions



Peter Steiner, Professor Emeritus. Dr. Steiner's major areas of research are literary theory and modern Slavic literature and culture. This fall semester, Dr. Steiner will teach SLAV575: Slavic Literary Theory



Vladislav Todorov, Senior Lecturer. Dr. Todorov is the author of several scholarly books as well as an accomplished fiction- and screen- writer. Three of his novels were made into films that garnered critical acclaim. Dr. Todorov is a voting member of the European Film Academy. This fall semester, Dr. Todorov will teach:

- RUSS111: Poetics of Screenplay: the Art of Plotting
- RUSS164: Russian and East European Film 1900 - 1945
- RUSS196: Russian Short Story



Julia Verkholtantsev, Associate Professor. Dr. Verkholtantsev's academic interests are in the field of cultural history, early modern and medieval literary and linguistic culture, and the history of ideas. This fall semester, Dr. Verkholtantsev will teach:

- RUSS213: Saints and Devils in Russian Literature and Tradition (Freshman Seminar)
- RUSS519: History of Russian Literary Language and Culture