RUSS 305: Russian Conversation and Composition through Cinema (3 credits)
Instructor: Holly Myers

This course explores modern Russian culture and society through the prism of Russian cinema. Students will watch, discuss, analyze, and write about some of the best known Soviet and post-Soviet films, starting with Aleksandrov’s 1936 propaganda vehicle «Цирк» and ending with «Восток-запад», the 1999 exposé of Stalin’s rule and the cold war. Other films include the prize-winning and heart-rending film about World War II «Летят журавли», the much-loved comedies «Иван Васильевич меняет профессию» and «Ирония судьбы» and the anti-war classic «Кавказский пленник». In the process, students will advance their skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. A diverse array of lexical, grammatical, and creative exercises will speed students’ progress toward higher linguistic proficiency.

Honors available

Prerequisite: Any 200-level RUSS course

RUSS 440: Special Topics: Russian Drama, Prose or Poetry: The Gulag (3 credits)
Instructor: Holly Myers

The Gulag constituted one of the most notorious examples of the twentieth-century’s totalitarian evil. At the same time, it was subject to one of the most radical campaigns of misrepresentation and manipulation conceived by the Soviet propaganda and supported to a large extent by many cultural and intellectual elites of the West. From the Bolshevik Revolution to the fall of the Soviet Union, the only evidence of the Gulag available to the outside world, apart from Soviet propaganda, were the testimonies of witnesses and survivors. Their stories functioned as the only available history. Gulag literature, therefore, complicates the traditional distinctions between literature and history. By examining Gulag literature in its many different forms, including propaganda, short stories, novellas, memoirs, poetry, and drama, we will learn the history of the Soviet Gulag system; we will also address questions of authenticity, authority, and morality in the literary representation of trauma and past events.

Honors available

Prerequisite: Any 300-level RUSS course