



To: Administrative Boards of the College of Arts & Sciences and the General College
From: Clayton Koelb
Chair, Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

Date: October 15, 2015
Re: Request to make changes in Major Concentrations and Minors in Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

Our request to make changes in our GSSL major concentrations and minors seeks to achieve 5 primary goals:

- A somewhat substantive overhaul of our Russian Literature and Culture Concentration
- “Tweaks” to our bulleted text in the Undergraduate Bulletin, which entail clarifications that have been requested during the preceding year by senior advisors in the College
- Changes to our upper-intermediate-level course sequence in German
- Integration of GSSL courses into concentrations
- Updates to the approved-courses lists for the German Media, Art and Culture major concentration, as well as for the Central European Studies major concentration

Changes to the Russian Literature and Culture Concentration Russian Studies

The Russian and Slavic faculty members have come to a decision that now is the time to bring the current range of Russian course offerings into accordance with the changes in the overall program. In view of declining enrollments across a large spectrum of the GSSL course offerings – which on the RUSS and SLAV side of the equation has been exacerbated by the loss of the Ph.D. and M.A. programs (as well as the retirement of one of our core faculty, Dr. Christopher Putney) – we are shifting our focus away from highly specialized courses and course sequences designed primarily to meet the needs of Ph.D. and M.A. students, in order to broaden the appeal, efficacy, and efficiency of our offerings to undergraduate students.

The revisions submitted herewith concern both language and literature/culture courses.

Presently our third-year, academic-year-long language course sequence comprises four courses, RUSS 321-322 and RUSS 406-407. In accordance with the requirements of the phased-out Ph.D. and M.A. programs, the focus of the first sequence has been conversation, while the second targeted grammar. Instead of dividing our third-year cohort between two separate courses, we will now streamline our third-year language offerings into one academic-year-long sequence, RUSS 409-410. This adjustment would unify the strengths of the conversation and grammar courses into a compact and straightforward sequence, providing our learners with the essential, indeed fundamental, applied Russian-language skills along with a much-needed environment where they can be honed. It will enable our graduating students to function in Russian in the main areas of their linguistic competence with a particular stress on the culturally informed comprehension and production of the language.

This change would allow us to give our students the opportunity to master their grammatical and conversational skills in a learning atmosphere that better represents the way Russian functions in native environments.

Our literature and culture offerings will likewise undergo significant changes:

First and foremost, we seek to streamline the way our core courses correspond to each other in their representation of the fundamental information and cultural artifacts. Most important, however, these changes are going to rectify the situation where literature and culture courses are not represented specifically among our core offerings. To ensure that our majors and concentrators are provided with ample opportunity to obtain a holistic understanding of the key literary works, cultural artifacts, and concepts in their development, we will augment the selection of our core requirements with two new, required, courses best seen as parts of an foundational sequence: RUSS 445 and RUSS 455. The first is an in-depth survey of the masterpieces of nineteenth-century literature and culture, and the other is a counterpart of this course devoted to the literature and culture of the twentieth-century.

Thus, we will create the following new courses:

RUSS 409, 410, 445, 455

And we will inactivate the following courses:

RUSS 321, 322, 406, 407, 431, 432, 441, 442

Since we will no longer teach these courses, students in the Russian concentration with a requirement term earlier than Fall 2016 may need adjustment in TNT to allow for exceptions to the older requirements that specify the deleted language courses.

The total number of credit hours required for graduation with a major in Russian language and culture is to remain the same, along with the overall number of core courses. While keeping the time-proven strengths of the structure intact, the proposed changes are intended to make the offerings more attractive and ultimately more rewarding and functional not only for our majors, but also for all enrolled students.

As a result of these changes, we will need to carefully edit the text of the Russian major and minor, as well as the lists of language courses mentioned for all of our concentrations that include Russian language options or requirements, showing:

RUSS 409 (instead of RUSS 321 and/or 406)
RUSS 410 (instead of RUSS 322 and/or 407)

Additional Changes to the text of our current bulletin descriptions:

At the request of an adviser, who found our current bulletin text confusing, we would like to clarify the language regarding the requirements for the Russian culture minor concentration:

A minimum of five courses in any aspect of Russian language, literature, or culture. The first two semesters of Russian (i.e., RUSS 101/102) may not be counted toward this minor.

Another adviser noted that the bulletin text says that GERM 101, 102, 203 and 204 are considered prerequisites for the German major concentrations (German Literature and Culture, or German Media, Arts, and Culture), or the German minor, and that therefore Tar Heel Tracker is looking for all four courses. Where a student receives placement credit and therefore does not take one or more of the courses, THT appears to think that the requirement has not been met. In addition, should we ever be in the position to offer the intensive GERM 105-206 sequence, those students may also not appear (to THT) to have fulfilled the prerequisite. Thus, we have opted to change this text to read:

Students must establish credit for GERM 204 (or GERM 206) as a prerequisite for a German major concentration .

(Similar edits will be added for the German minor, and for the language requirements for our Central European and Russian/Slavic concentrations; the exact wording for all edits regarding elementary and intermediate language requirements has been worked out with personnel in the Registrar's office, in the interest of ensuring that it is clear enough to ensure proper coding for Tar Heel Tracker.)

Changes to our upper-intermediate-level German course sequence:

In the interest of increasing course enrollments in our upper-intermediate and upper-level undergraduate German courses, and in order to make it easier for students for whom German is a secondary interest to fit our courses into their schedule, we have made a change in the course sequence for GERM 301, GERM 302, GERM 303, GERM 304, and GERM 305: students may take these courses in any order or concurrently. The only exception is that students should plan on taking either GERM 301 or GERM 302 before, or concurrently with, GERM 303. Thus, the prerequisites for these courses need to be adjusted.

This change will be achieved primarily by way of changes to prerequisites on CRAS forms. However, since it is a major departure from the way we have traditionally viewed the sequence of our major requirements (and since it therefore may cause confusion among advisors), we wish to document the change here, as well.

Integration of GSLL courses into concentrations:

One of our new proposed courses, GSLL 276 “Music, Image, Text”, is designed to be offered in association with German, Russian, or other Central European themes in Art and Music. The actual country (countries) of origin will change from time to time, making the course periodically appropriate for German concentrations, the Russian concentration, or Central European/Slavic concentrations. For this reason, we have added text throughout the bulleted section to acknowledge that GSLL courses may from time to time be approved as appropriate elective choices for the individual concentrations.

Updates to approved-courses lists:

In the interest of keeping up-to-date with relevant course offerings in other departments, we have researched and chosen a handful of new courses to be approved as additional electives for those of our major concentrations which list courses from outside the department as approved elective options.

These additions to our courselists have been discussed with, and approved by, faculty in History, Jewish Studies, and Religious Studies:

For the Central European Studies Major Concentration:

HIST/JWST 311

Ghettos and Shtetls? Urban Life in East European Jewish History

HIST 466

Modern European Intellectual History

HIST/JWST 476

Borderlands: Religion and Ethnicity in Modern East Central Europe

HIST/JWST 485

Modern East European Jewish History

JWST/RELI 420

Post-Holocaust Ethics and Theology

JWST 420 x-list request is pending approval

For the German Media, Arts and Culture Major Concentration:

HIST 465

Intellectual History of Europe, Early Period

JWST/RELI 420

Post-Holocaust Ethics and Theology

JWST 420 x-list request is pending approval.