

**Higher Education Heritage Language Program
2nd Year Russian Course for Heritage Speakers
Stony Brook University**

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Type of Institution: Research university (undergraduate-graduate)

Languages/dialects taught: Russian

Type of Courses: Undergraduate level Russian course, taught specifically for Russian Heritage Speakers

Program Description

What are the purposes and goals of the program: Since many of the heritage Russian speakers have different levels of fluency, it is hard to place these students in a normal language track. This course is designed to strengthen the spoken, written, and grammar skills of each student so they can be integrated into a normal Russian course with non-native speakers.

Program origins: Founded about ten years ago, the program has had varying success. Although the course was stopped for a while do to lack of enrollment, it has begun again recently to accommodate the increasing number of heritage Russian speakers at Stony Brook University.

Faculty's and administration's expectations for the course: To try and accommodate all heritage speakers interested in studying Russian.

Students

- First generation immigrants
- Second generation immigrants

Total Student Enrollment: About 15

Identification of a Heritage Speaker: A placement test is administered before each class that includes questions about family history.

Percentage of students that complete the course: 90%

Percentage of students that continue to study heritage language after completing

the program: 50%

Reasons students do not complete the program: Students have different expectations for the course

Students' attitudes toward the language varieties they speak: The students are able to speak well in Russian, but they also want to strengthen their literacy skills.

Faculty

Total number of faculty teaching in the program: 1

Languages the faculty are proficient in: Russian

Credentials:

- Doctorate of Arts in Foreign Language Instruction: Russian
- Master of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language
- Bachelor of Arts in English

Instruction

Course:

RUS 213: Intermediate Russian for Students of Russian Speaking Background
Required hours per week: 2 hours and 20 minutes

Language Skills

Heritage Language Skills

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Other: Vocabulary development

Expected level of language proficiency at the end of the course: It is not entirely clear, because each student comes in at a different level. However, the program tries to develop at least a basic competency in writing, grammar, and vocabulary.

Culture

- Geography
- History
- Customs
- Social and culture norms
- Other: Modern Media

Methodology

Methodology/Instructional Strategies: All classes are conducted strictly in Russian. In addition, many of the assignments, readings, and discussions deal with the cultural dimensions of Russia.

Materials

Textbooks: *Russian for Russians* (Slavica Pub, 2002)
Golden Age of Russian Literature (Kessinger Publishing, 2005)
Mir russkix (Kendall/Hunt, 1997)

Technology used in classroom: Television and the Internet

Assessment

- Pop quizzes
- Mid-term exam
- Final exam
- Oral presentation

Articulation

Involvement in the heritage community: The Russian heritage community is mainly located in Brooklyn; however, the university itself is located on Long Island. Students are encouraged to go to the Brooklyn area to practice language skills.

What the program has in place

Financial support: Funding comes from the university and the state.

Program development: The program is also set to introduce a new online 3rd year course for heritage speakers starting in the fall of 2006.

Special Challenges and Comments

Special Challenges: All students that participate in the course have different levels of proficiency. Teaching the class can be difficult, because it is hard to know what to expect from the students. Also, it's hard to develop a curriculum that will strengthen all these different language levels.

Comments: The program could be strengthened by better funding and advertisement.