

A GUIDE TO
INDEPENDENT WORK

IN THE

DEPARTMENT OF

SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

JUNIOR INDEPENDENT WORK

AND

THE SENIOR THESIS

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INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures welcomes intellectually curious students seeking to understand the cultures and societies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and increasingly in Siberian/Eurasian Studies. The Russian language serves as the gateway to the major and to independent work, allowing students to read the classic texts of Russian literature in the original. To that end, many students who have completed the first year of Russian language study (Russian 101 and Russian 102) study in St. Petersburg during the summer after Russian 102, as part of Princeton University's Princeton in Petersburg program. The students complete the second year of Russian language study during the summer program, which is taught by Princeton faculty members Ksana Blank and Mark Pettus, and by Russian teachers in St. Petersburg. During the fall semester after their return to Princeton, the students enter advanced courses (Russian 207, Russian 208 of language study) and other appropriate courses. For those students who choose to concentrate on cultures to the West (Central Europe) and East (Eurasia and Siberia) of this Russian Imperial core, the department offers instruction in Polish, Czech, and Bosnia-Croatian-Serbian (South Slavic). Faculty also have competence in Bulgarian and Rumanian, languages from the region that are offered as reading courses. We encourage our undergraduates to enroll in summer language courses on site in Central Europe, and some of our most accomplished concentrators have done so.

The Department welcomes not only students whose primary intellectual interest is literary, but also those whose interest centers on such fields as politics, history, sociology, cultural anthropology, film, comparative literature, theater, performance studies, music, the study of language, and the visual arts, on topics such as Russia's relationship to the West and on Russia's relationship to other parts of the world. We are a small department and encourage vigorous interaction with other programs and disciplines at the university, including, but not limited to the disciplines listed above.

The Department prides itself on the flexibility of the major, its rich interdisciplinary relations with other programs and departments on campus, and on the accessibility of its faculty members. Thus, students will find that their independent work in the Department will be individually tailored to each student, based on his/her background, intellectual interests, and discipline-related goals. The process takes place in close consultation with the Slavic Director of Undergraduate Studies, independent work advisers, and professors in courses.

In its training and preparation of students, the Department seriously considers students' goals for the future in line with the educational goals that the Department adheres to in courses and in independent work. Based on their course work and independent work, students who major in the Slavic Department are well-prepared, given those goals of the Department (see rubric,

“Educational Goals” below) for careers in any number of fields, including, but not limited to medicine, law, government, international relations, performing arts (where expertise in Slavic cultures is an exotic professional plus), as well as being well prepared for pursuing graduate study in the field, for a career in academics.

Slavic Department graduates have gone on to successful careers in many professions, including teaching (university and college teaching and administration in private universities and colleges such as Harvard University, Miami University, and Adelphi University; in public universities such as Indiana University, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of South Carolina; and secondary school teaching); law; medicine; translation; business; the State Department (including postings in Russia); and the arts.

Princeton Slavic majors are highly competitive for Fulbright fellowships in Russia and Eastern Europe. Students have the opportunity to study Polish, Czech, Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian, and Bulgarian as well as Russian.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

- The Slavic Department aspires to develop in its majors a critically informed appreciation for the literature and culture of Russia and the Slavic world.
- Majors should develop comprehensive knowledge of those historical trajectories, artistic trends, and intellectual currents that have shaped in a unique way the literary tradition they have chosen as their object of study.
- Slavic majors should be critically equipped and discerning readers of texts. Apart from intimate acquaintance with primary sources in their area of interest, they are expected to acquire knowledge of theoretical paradigms and productive critical approaches to literature and culture.
- Since linguistic competence is an indispensable prerequisite in the learning process, the Department expects students to attain a level of proficiency that will allow them to work with both primary and secondary sources in the target language. The student’s competence in the chosen Slavic language should enable him/her to appreciate the subtleties of artistic expression in literary works, as well as to navigate the intricacies of critical/theoretical texts.
- Majors are expected to perfect their writing skills, so as to produce work that is solidly structured, rhetorically appealing, and logically sustained.

JUNIOR INDEPENDENT WORK

Overview, Goals, and Process

Junior independent work, for every Slavic Department major, consists of two junior independent papers, one written during the fall semester of junior year, and one written during the spring semester of the same year. Typically, the order of the junior independent papers is the following: one paper, in English (detailed description follows), during the fall semester; and one paper, in Russian (detailed description follows) during the spring semester.

One of the goals of the junior independent work written in English is for students to gain mastery over a subset of approaches within the discipline by applying research methods to an area of focus determined by the student, in consultation with and close contact with each student's English junior paper faculty adviser. A further goal of the junior paper in English is to develop the student's skills in working with both English and Russian sources. The goal of the Russian paper is for students, under the supervision of the faculty adviser, to advance further, in addition to their departmental course work, their Russian-language skills, as one component in preparation for undertaking research for the senior thesis.

Junior Paper in English: The first paper, 5,000 to 6,000 words in length (twenty to twenty-five pages), can be on any topic related to Russian literature, culture (performance studies, visual arts, theater, cinema, popular culture), linguistics, language, history, politics, anthropology, or sociology. Russian sources must be used, although the extent to which Russian will be used will be determined largely by the individual student's level of Russian-language competence. Students who wish to write about other Slavic traditions (for example, Czech or Polish), assuming that they have the linguistic competence, are encouraged to do so.

Junior Paper in Russian: For the second paper, the student may choose between a paper written in Russian, or a close analysis a work of poetry, to be written in English. For the paper in Russian (approximately 2,000 word), the student analyzes a Russian short story or poem, chosen by the student in close consultation with his/her junior paper adviser. The second option is a close analysis (3000 words, written in English) of a translation of a Russian poem into English. For this latter option, students provide a critique of an English translation (or possibly two English translations) of a poem, based on a close reading of the Russian original. Depending on the amount of Russian that the student has studied, the level of competence, and other factors (such as absence from the Princeton University campus for the purpose of study abroad), the order of these papers can be reversed. Thus, the paper in Russian or on a Russian poem would be completed during the fall semester, and the paper in English, during the spring semester.

General Guidelines for Junior Independent Work: The deadlines for Junior papers follow the university deadlines as outlined in the university calendar. Check the departmental website for due dates.

The procedure and process of choosing a topic and of an adviser is closely monitored by both the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the individual faculty member who acts as the junior independent work adviser for the individual student during that particular semester. In the early stages of choosing a topic for the English junior paper, the students are encouraged to think about questions that have been raised in their readings, and about themes that have emerged as they have read, explored, and taken courses.

Normally, during the first and second weeks of the semester, that is to say, the Director of Undergraduate Studies contacts all of the departmental majors in the junior class and sets up an extended individual appointment with each student, in order to explore, together with the student, the student's general ideas about the direction that he/she wishes to pursue for determining the more precise, narrower range of subject matter within the scope of a larger, broader range of fruitful themes. In the course of the conversation, the student can, but is not required to, suggest the name or names of a faculty member or faculty members with whom, depending on the topic, the student wishes to have as the junior paper adviser for that particular semester.

Based on the results of those initial extended individual consultations, the Director of Undergraduate Studies contacts individual faculty members whose specialties fall within the areas of expertise required by the themes chosen by the students. The Director of Undergraduate Studies asks an individual faculty member whether he/she would be willing to work on the chosen theme with the student. The Director of Undergraduate Studies then informs the student who his/her junior independent work adviser will be for the semester. The student then gets in touch with the adviser in order to set up a meeting whose objective is to refine still further the chosen topic. The student and faculty adviser, together, set up a schedule of meetings and of dates by which to meet targeted goals for each subsequent stage of the student's research and writing.

During each subsequent meeting, the faculty adviser comments upon the student's progress, makes recommendations as to how to proceed in a productive fashion; answers the student's questions; and asks the student questions intended to guide the student in an expedient manner.

The key to writing a successful junior paper, we have decided, is for the student to begin early and to work at a steady pace, consistently, from one week to the next, instead of attempting to do all of the research and writing near the end of the semester. It is up to the student to work in a step-by-step manner. One of the objectives of independent work is the training of students, with the help of the faculty adviser, to undertake and complete successful independent work. The adviser is there to offer support and advice in the student's endeavor.

In the case of the Russian junior paper, during the first two weeks of the spring semester, the Director of Undergraduate Studies contacts each departmental junior major and sets up an extended individual appointment with him/her. In the course of that meeting, the Director of Undergraduate Studies, based on the student's level of language competence and on the student's focus, determines which author or authors each student would be interested in exploring in order to

come to a satisfactory choice of short story or poem. This may also be done with another faculty adviser.

The student then decides upon an appropriate short story or poem and informs the Director of Undergraduate Studies of his/her decision. As soon as the choice is approved, the student and the Director of Undergraduate Studies or other faculty adviser (hereafter referred to as faculty adviser in the section about the Russian junior paper) begin to meet on a regular basis. The student consults with his/her faculty adviser in order to review the translation, from Russian to English, that he/she has prepared, of the chosen Russian text. The goals of this part of the process are for the student to demonstrate his/her detailed knowledge of each word and phrase of the Russian text, and, in this respect, for the faculty adviser to monitor each student's level of comprehension of the Russian-language text. The student receives feedback from his/her faculty adviser so that his/her skills in the Russian language are further improved and enhanced.

After each student has completed the process of reading and translating the text, he/she begins to write an analysis, in Russian, of the chosen text. Students must submit a draft to the faculty adviser no later than two weeks before the paper is due. The draft will be returned with grammatical errors underlined, but not corrected. The student then corrects the errors, rewrites the paper, and resubmits it. This draft constitutes the final, completed version of the Russian junior paper.

SENIOR THESIS

Overview, Goals, and Process

Many students, even years and decades after graduation, find that writing the senior thesis was one of *the* most educationally and intellectually rewarding experiences of their Princeton academic career. They point to the opportunity that it afforded them to concentrate on a long-term, year-long research project, to develop their skills in their major, to increase their knowledge and skills in their chosen discipline, and to afford them the opportunity to build upon and bring to bear, for a lengthy research project, the knowledge, critical thinking and analytical tools and techniques that they attained and sharpened throughout the years of their university education. Deadline is two weeks before the first day of reading period.

In the Slavic Department, the senior thesis may be devoted to any topic in the general area of Russian language or literature (or, assuming sufficient linguistic competence, Czech or Polish). Interdisciplinary topics are also encouraged, provided that they have a clear connection to Russian culture.

The thesis is written in English, but substantial research must be done in Russian. The length of the senior thesis should be between 80 and 100 pages, excluding appendices and bibliography. (Permission of the thesis adviser is required if the text is to exceed significantly the prescribed maximum length.) The senior thesis is ordinarily made up of an introduction, two or three chapters, and a conclusion.

Students should choose a subject that is both challenging and reasonable. (Students should keep in mind that this is, after all, a senior thesis and not a doctoral dissertation.) IN this regard, the first few weeks of the first semester of senior year are among the most important of the entire year. The more carefully a subject is delineated, the easier it is to organize research and writing.

With that in mind, the Director of Undergraduate Studies, very near the start of the academic year, during the first weeks of the first semester, contacts the senior majors in order to set up an extended one-on-one session with each of them. The goal of this initial session is to begin the process of dialogue with regard to the choice of a senior thesis topic. The discussion centers on the array of potential research directions in which the general topic chosen by the student might lead. At this stage, the student typically might have only a very general idea of what he/she would like to explore. The student normally chooses a topic that has presented itself, in general contours, in the form of questions that have been raised in departmental, cognate, or other course, in papers written, or in the process of researching junior papers. In recent years, some students have chosen to continue to explore some theme studied in the junior independent work. Some of our best majors have received university funding to do research in Russia or Central Europe on their senior thesis project.

The goal of the initial meeting is to clarify the first step of the process, that is, for the student to do research in order to narrow the topic. Furthermore, in conjunction with and depending upon the particular topic, at this meeting, the student may, but is not required to, express a preference for a senior thesis faculty adviser.

After the Director of Undergraduate Studies has spoken with each student, he/she determines, with respect to the area of expertise of departmental faculty members, who each student's senior thesis faculty adviser will be. He/she asks the faculty member whether that faculty member would consent to serve as the senior thesis adviser, informs the student, and instructs the student to contact the faculty adviser. The student then contacts the faculty member in order to set up a meeting.

The faculty adviser and the student, together, explore the next stage of the senior thesis process. The student brings ideas to be discussed and questions to be answered. The faculty member offers suggestions about how to proceed judiciously and efficiently. This entails the recommendation, by the faculty member, of sources to read, both primary and secondary, in both English and Russian. The faculty member and student, together, agree upon a schedule in order to meet, on a regular basis, throughout the fall semester.

The targeted goal, for the first semester, is for the student, as soon as possible, to narrow his/her topic to a manageable scope; to create an outline of the chapters of the thesis; and to write the first draft of one chapter by the last day of classes before the December vacation break. (See website for current dates). The thesis adviser reads the chapter and sets up an appointment with the student, for the first few weeks of January, in order to discuss necessary revisions.

The chapter that is written first does not have to be the first chapter of the finished thesis. It can be any chapter. The essential requirement is that it be the easiest chapter for the student to conceptualize. The student will then find that he/she is already in writing mode and can more easily, with greater confidence, move on to the next chapter.

The faculty adviser and student then decide upon a schedule for deadlines for drafts of subsequent chapters to be handed in during second semester, and decide upon a schedule for deadlines for revised chapters to be submitted to the faculty adviser.

The introduction is often written last, for frequently, only at the very end of the research and writing process will the student have full grasp of the framework of the whole project that includes both the overarching structured framework and the placement of the separate, discrete units of each separate section of the thesis. The conclusion includes the summing up of the major conceptual ideas that the student has investigated in the body of the thesis. The conclusion might also include suggestions for additional investigation, were the topic to be further explored.

Before a student begins to do research for and to write the senior thesis, the task can be a daunting one. Students have written long papers for course, and they have written the twenty to twenty-five-page junior paper in English, but they have never had to write an 80 to 100-page thesis. The faculty thesis adviser advises, suggests readings, goes over drafts, recommends primary and secondary research sources, and answers questions throughout the year. Moreover, the faculty thesis adviser facilitates the year-long thesis-writing process in other ways as well. For instance, he/she points out that if the student divides the task into discrete chapters/sections of approximately twenty pages each, then in certain ways, writing the senior thesis is like writing several twenty-to-twenty-five-page papers, a task which the students have successfully accomplished prior to work on the current project.

Advice to Students about the Process

The adviser helps to alleviate the students' fears in a variety of ways. During the course of the year, students may feel, at times, overwhelmed. ("I've never written a senior thesis, so I don't know how." "There is too much material." "I'll never finish.") They may feel scared. ("There is not enough material." "My ideas are obvious.") They may feel pressured. ("I have too much work.") They may feel panicked. ("I'll never finish by the deadline.")

Students are encouraged not to hesitate to bring to the attention of the thesis adviser the obstacles that they encounter along the way to completion of the thesis. The students are guided by the adviser's facilitation of the process – by advice that reminds students that the process of work on any long project entails patches of easy, idea-filled, days of stimulating research and writing; days of drudgery; and days filled with doubt and confusion. The adviser can advise the students that these responses are all part of the normal rhythm of the year-long research and writing of a senior thesis. One piece of advice cannot be repeated too often, and that is that students should begin early on the process of research and writing. Another piece of advice for the faculty adviser to tell the students is that they should choose a topic that they love. When students are highly motivated by a subject that they are passionate about, they are less likely to fall into despondency on the days of drudgery, doubt, and confusion.

If at any point along the way, the students feel that their ideas are fuzzy, disorganized, too general, too narrow – that is, if they feel that they are losing their way --, those are the very times at which the students should meet with their advisers. The advisers can help the students clarify their ideas. Often, the tendency, on the part of students, is to avoid their advisers until their ideas are polished. Students are encouraged to contact their advisers, so that the two of them, together, can work out strategies for solving those particular thesis-writing problems. The thesis adviser's guidance in the thesis-writing process extends to the advice to students that sometimes the feelings of deepest confusion are precursors to the most exciting breakthroughs of, "Oh, that's how it all fits together." Although it is difficult for the students, when they are in the middle of one of those periods of confusion and desperation, they learn that research and writing are not always linear. Some of the most painful sensations of feeling lost and discouraged will be those that lead to some of the most productive instances of joy and discovery. Students might be urged to think of the analogy of how they learned to ride a two-wheeler bicycle. First, they were excited because they knew that they were embarking on a new adventure. Then they felt frustrated because they kept falling off the bike. They, they gathered up their reserves of perseverance and determination. They focused. They pushed through, despite the scraped knees. And then, miracle of all miracles, they stopped wobbling and rode smoothly and happily. It's the same process with the senior thesis.

Writing a thesis – or a doctoral dissertation, or a book – is like life as a whole. There are ups and downs, but the more of yourself that you put into it, the more meaningful and satisfying the experience will be. Over the past few years we have strengthened the departmental track in the performing arts, and so far we have had one creative theatrical senior thesis (a production of a Russian modernist play), produced by a young woman very active in Princeton's Theater Program. We hope to continue this initiative.

Guidelines to Departmental Grading Structures and Standards

The learning objectives and general evaluative criteria are important to keep in mind. In evaluating the senior thesis, faculty members are guided by the general educational goals set forth by the Slavic Department for its departmental majors. The thesis is a significant way in which to verify, measure, and evaluate the extent to which these goals have been attained in the case of each particular concentrator. Specifically, the thesis should demonstrate:

- Comprehensive knowledge of the period and/or area of Russian/Slavic culture the student has chosen to examine.
- Awareness of the most important scholarly positions taken on the issue(s) the thesis addresses.
- Ability to situate one's argument in relation to pre-existing scholarship by criticizing, in a sophisticated, knowledgeable manner, the perceived shortcomings of other scholarly works and by establishing a dialogue with scholarship upon which the thesis will further build.

- Critical acumen on the part of the student in approaching established viewpoints and evaluations of the issue under discussion.
- The concentrator's intimate understanding of the primary text(s) under investigation.
- The concentrator's ability to understand secondary texts in the target language and evaluate them critically.
- Ability to write in lucid English, producing prose possessing rhetorical persuasiveness and clearly articulated argumentative structure.

Junior independent work is graded by the faculty adviser under whose direction the student wrote the junior paper. The senior thesis is graded by two readers. The first reader is the student's senior thesis adviser. The second reader is chosen by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, after asking the faculty member whether he/she consents to be the second reader. Each of the two readers writes a separate reader's report, assessing and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses, and pointing out areas that need improvement. The two readers consult and agree upon a grade. In the rare instance when the two readers cannot agree upon a grade, the departmental chair has the authority to appoint a third reader.

That grade is conveyed to the student. The students receive a copy of each reader's report with the agreed upon grade included.

The criteria for grading independent work are listed below:

“A” range -- Superior

An “A” range is a true mark of distinction, assigned for independent work excellent in nearly all respects.

In **content**, “A” work demonstrates a deep understanding of the topic or assignment. The work has a clearly defined thesis, which is both worthy of developing and specific enough to allow treatment within the prescribed limits of the paper. The author presents rich material of primary and secondary sources and manages to “digest” this material thoroughly and productively. The student's writing effectively brings to light the complexity of the topic, maps out a range of existent (or possible) scholarly perspectives, and enters into a genuine dialogue with critical sources. Claims made are supported convincingly through argument and citation. The author develops a thoughtful and original interpretation of the topic, one from which every interested reader could significantly learn.

The **structure** of an “A” paper demonstrates clarity and logical coherence. The writing progresses in a smooth and logically compelling way (it “flows”), and individual paragraphs are unified and internally well-developed. Transitions between paragraphs are effective, creating a sense of continuity. One paragraph logically prepares for the paragraph to follow.

The **style** of an “A” paper is distinguished by both clarity and elegance. It showcases excellent sentence construction, perfect or near-perfect grammar, and correct spelling. The author commands a rich vocabulary, employs words in their precise meaning, draws knowingly and judiciously upon terminology pertinent to the chosen topic and field of inquiry. The phrasing is tight, without redundancy and wordiness. The writing displays awareness of the intended audience and effectively manages to address it. The sentence structure is varied, avoiding, where possible, the use of the passive voice. Quotations are used with manifest purpose and appropriately incorporated into the text. Citation and formatting standards are applied rigorously throughout.

“B” range – Very Good

While a “B” range grade suggests that there is room for improvement in the quality of the student’s written work, a “B” grade is not a mark of underachievement, and should not in any way be construed as implying a failure on the part of the student. It is a testament to significant effort and promise.

The **content** of a “B” range independent work shows competence in the topic and sufficient awareness of relevant contexts. The thesis may not be very original, but it is well-defined and adequately supported by evidence. Although intellectually persuasive, the argument may need more development. The author incorporates a range of secondary sources into the work, comments intelligently on them, but may come up short of adding a novel interpretative perspective to the ones already available. Independent analysis is attempted, but is outweighed by synthesis.

With regard to **structure**, a “B” work displays many of the features of an “A” effort. The presentation proceeds with a clear sense of direction, even if there are a few awkward transitions and unclear connections between statements or paragraphs. Some paragraphs may be cumbersome in internal organization, but their link to the main argument remains clear, and the point conveyed in them – sufficiently transparent for the reader not to have to reread the paragraphs.

The **style** of a “B” work is distinguished by clarity and precision, if not always by elegance. Spelling and punctuation are accurate, grammar is very good, and sentence structure is strong. There may be some awkward phrasing in isolated instances. The vocabulary employed is absolutely adequate to the task at hand. Repetition of words and phrases is generally avoided. The author uses appropriate scholarly idiom, with only occasional lapses. The presentation may not always be interesting and dynamic, but it does not devolve into numbing monotony. Except for minor inconsistencies or omissions, formatting and citation styles are carefully followed.

“C” range – Satisfactory

A grade of “C” suggests that the student’s work allows for considerable improvement in certain areas, while evidencing an adequate foundation upon which this improvement could be made.

With respect to **content**, a “C” paper may display one or more of these shortcomings: topic too broad to be handled adequately; a thesis is sketched, but is minimal or trivial; there is evidence of research, but the research is inadequate to allow for proper treatment of the subject; weak support for the claims being made; inconsistent or faulty logic in building the argument; secondary sources are incorporated into the presentation, but in a superficial, mechanical fashion, without genuine engagement with the opinions of others or without proper understanding of their position; analysis is attempted, but is poorly executed and unconvincing; the author treats personal opinions as decisive evidence or takes contestable matters as self-evident truths.

The **structure** of a “C” paper presents difficulties for the reader, although these difficulties may be surmountable. Paragraphs may connect with neighboring ones, but in a mechanical or purely rhetorical way, thus failing to create a sense of a unified whole. The line of argument meanders unnecessarily, is broken by sudden digressions, or “jumps” erratically between points whose connection is not easily discernible. Accumulation is substituted for logical structure, so that the text reads more like a loose collection of statements rather than a cohesive argument.

With regard to **style**, a “C” paper may, on occasion, exhibit awkward word choice, inappropriate use of terminology, slippages into colloquial language, or vagueness of phrasing. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar may be deficient, but not to the point of impeding comprehension. Generally correct, the sentence structure may at times be cumbersome, meandering, or choppy. The student shows awareness of citation styles, but makes errors or omissions in documenting sources.

“D” – Unsatisfactory

A grade of “D” indicates alarming shortcomings in the student’s written work on one or several fronts.

In terms of **content**, a “D” paper is characterized by one or more of these defects: the central idea is scantily defined or insufficiently thought through; the thesis is minimal, holds no intellectual interest (i.e., is not worth explicating), or is altogether absent; there are significant gaps in relevant knowledge; if present, good ideas or observations are lacking supporting evidence and proper argumentation; the paper shows little evidence of serious research; if present, references to scholarship on the topic are haphazard and perfunctory, contributing next to nothing to the substance of the presentation; the text exhibits weak grasp of the subject and no appreciation for its complexity; if attempted, interpretation is overly trivial, misguided, or relies uncritically on personal beliefs and predilections.

The **structure** of a “D” paper may resemble that of a very rough (and not particularly good) draft. Statements are “thrown together,” failing to produce an effective structure. The text is sectioned at random, so that the resulting paragraphs do not form meaningful entities. Some paragraphs may be disproportionately long or, alternatively, cut down to short, choppy fragments. The overall presentation follows an erratic or unclear course. Connections between one thought and another are weak, presenting a serious challenge even to a diligent reader. This type of paper often contains passages with no obvious relation to the presumed topic under discussion.

The general **style** of a “D” level paper may fall into the extremes of overly personal writing or the insipid, mechanized stringing together of “smart words” (memorized set pieces of scholarly jargon). The language lacks precision; sometimes terms are used not for what they mean, but for how they sound. Phrasing is often awkward, and may show a mixture of highly incongruent styles (attempts at idiomatic use spliced with colloquialisms). The lack of use of a thesaurus may result in the repetition of words or phrases deemed important. There are more than occasional errors in grammar and spelling. Punctuation is inconsistent. Taken as a whole, the mechanics of writing are on a level that impedes comprehension. The format of “D” work may be inappropriate, with no consistent pattern of citation.

“F” – Unacceptable

Being a failing grade, an “F” paper speaks of cardinal problems in approach, in the understanding of the assignment, in the treatment of the chosen topic, in composition, or in the mechanics of writing. It may be an indication that the student approached the assignment carelessly or lazily. “F” may also be given for writing that violates the fundamental ethics of scholarly work.

The **content** of a failed paper may present evidence of one or more of the following: lack of effort; no identifiable thesis; inability to grasp essential concepts associated with the field of inquiry; failure to grasp the meaning and import of primary and secondary texts used; no sensitivity to artistic convention; little or no evidence of research; inability to construct an argument; a penchant for airing claims unsupported by anything by personal conviction; appropriating without due acknowledgement the ideas of others.

The **structure** of an “F” paper displays the following: the writing conveys no sense of progression (it “rambles”); paragraphs are not unified; the connections between them are poor or missing; overall plan or structure is visible only to the author; length is inappropriate.

Some of these features may characterize the **style** of a failed piece of writing: diction generally inappropriate to the stated topic; consistent vagueness of formulation; no awareness of or grotesque use of scholarly idiom; frequent repetition or paraphrasing of statements already made; frequent grammatical errors, making reading an arduous and unrewarding task; consistent careless spelling or punctuation; inappropriate format; poor handling of quotations; disregard of citation styles; failure to cite consulted material.

Note on incorporating original language sources:

All citations should appear in the original language and in translation. In some instances, published translations are acceptable; this should be discussed early on with the adviser. However, even if a published translation is cited, it is the student's responsibility to check its accuracy. Students are asked to take extra care in their incorporation of Russian, Polish, Czech, Bosnian, Croatian and/or Serbian, language. If quotations consistently contain typographical errors, the grade will be lowered.

All internet translation services, including Google Translate, are regarded as plagiarism and are therefore a violation of Princeton's Honor Code.

Senior Thesis Formatting Guidelines

- The senior thesis should be printed in 12-pt font on white, letter-size paper (8.5x11") single-sided. The text, including block citations, should be double-spaced throughout.
- Leave margins of 1.5" on the left and 1" on the right, top, and bottom of the page.
- All pages of the thesis must be numbered. Beginning with the first page of the introduction, all pages are numbered sequentially with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.). All preceding pages (title and copyright pages, dedication, table of contents, etc.) are numbered sequentially with lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii). All pagination should appear at the bottom of the page, centered.
- The thesis must include a title page, a copyright page, a table of contents, and a bibliography.
- The title page should include the author's name, date, and the following statement: "A senior thesis submitted to the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Princeton University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts." (For a sample title page, see below.)
- The copyright page must include two statements. The first is the honor pledge: "I hereby certify that this paper represents my own work in accordance with University regulations." The second is the following statement: "I further authorize Princeton University to reproduce this thesis by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals

for the purpose of scholarly research.” The student should sign his/her name under each of the two statements. (For a sample copyright page, see below.)

- Standard parts of the main text are: an introduction, chapters (these may be divided into sub-chapters or sections), and a conclusion.
- Additionally, the thesis may include one or more of these elements: a dedication, acknowledgements, a note on transliteration, a list of illustrations, preface, appendices.
- The student may use either footnotes or endnotes. They should be single spaced, with a double space after each note, in order to separate it from the following one. Footnotes should be in smaller type than the main text (10-point font recommended). Endnotes should be in 12-point font.
- The formatting of citations and the bibliography should follow the MLA (Modern Languages Association) Manual of Style format. A summary of MLA citation styles can be found online.
- Three copies of each thesis should be submitted to the Slavic Department. All three should be bound with a binder clip. Also, a pdf version should be sent to Ms. Jessica Heslin, heslin@princeton.edu

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Princeton University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Bachelor Arts

Princeton, New Jersey

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RESOURCES

Program in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

The Program in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies draws on a core faculty in the humanities, history, and social sciences to support and maintain a diverse undergraduate curriculum, a program for study abroad in Russia, an outstanding library collection in Slavic and other languages, as well as a range of on-campus and off-campus activities. It is an affiliate of the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies. Undergraduates may acquire a Certificate of Proficiency in conjunction with a major in any department. It is a common option for Slavic Department students to combine their departmental major with a Certificate from the Program. Slavic Department students can find program requirements on the Slavic Department website.

Writing Center

An important resource on campus is the Writing Center.

<http://www.princeton.edu/writing/center/>

Located in Whitman College, the Writing Center [offers free one-on-one conferences](#) with experienced fellow writers trained to consult on assignments in any discipline. When working on your JP or thesis, you can schedule 80-minute conferences with a graduate student fellow from Slavic or a related department. When booking an appointment, select the “by field” option, then if desired you may choose an appointment with a graduate student fellow from the Slavic

Department. The Writing Center also holds general 50-minute regular conferences seven days a week and drop-in hours Sunday through Thursday evenings.

Independent Work Mentor Programming

Recognizing the challenges and solitude of independent work, Independent Work Mentors from the Writing Center prepare workshops and programming to aid juniors and seniors in their research. Students should regularly check the [Princeton Undergraduate Research Calendar](#) (PURC) on the website of the Office of Undergraduate Research for upcoming programming and workshops, which cover topics ranging from preparing funding proposals to note taking, and from making an argument to draft review.

[Independent Work Mentors](#) can help interested juniors and seniors form writing groups as a forum to discuss challenges they are confronting in their work and brainstorm strategies for dealing with various issues.

Research Support

The [Office of Undergraduate Research](#) serves to inform, engage, connect, and support currently enrolled undergraduates on matters related to research at Princeton; to enhance independent work through campus-wide initiatives and departmental collaborations; and to promote students' research achievements through research symposia and written and video communications. Their website is the central hub for information about undergraduate research including student-authored [research advice on the PCUR blog](#), departmental [Independent Work Guides](#), [funding opportunities](#), and subscribe to [PURC](#), the central calendar for upcoming events and deadlines.

Academic Support at Princeton (ASAP)

Students can take advantage of an online resource, Academic Support at Princeton (ASAP), at www.princeton.edu/asap. Academic opportunities for students include tutoring, workshops focused on particular academic skill sets, the availability of librarians in order to aid students in their research, etc.

Senior Thesis Research Funding

The Office of the Dean of the College provides opportunities for students to apply for funding for research on the senior thesis. <http://www.princeton.edu/odoc/announcements/20100917/>

Examples of funding needs include travel expenses and other research expenses. Juniors may apply during spring semester for senior thesis research funding during the summer before senior year. During the fall semester of senior year, students may apply for research funding for research conducted during the academic year.

Russian, East European, Eurasian, and Other Slavic Library Resources

Departmental students can benefit, in their research, from Princeton's Russian and Slavic Studies library collections, which cover a wide range of subjects and formats, from scholarly monographs through electronic data, and which were developed over the past fifty years. Today, the Slavic and east European Studies collections share a multidisciplinary character with area studies resources elsewhere at Princeton. Departmental students find that consultations with the Slavic Bibliographer in Firestone Library are useful for independent research as these students navigate the Slavic library collections with a focus on their independent work topics.

Princeton's Russian and Slavic collections number over 300,000 volumes. The library maintains over 1,000 active serials (about 60% in languages of the region) and subscribes to about 1500 monographic series. Research materials include many other formats, such as survey data and statistics in electronic and print formats, maps, newspapers, manuscripts, and archival materials. Of the Eastern European holdings, about 50% are Russian, 10% Czech and Slovak, 15% Ukrainian, 10% other (Belorussian and South Slavic – Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian, Macedonian.)

Princeton's holdings are strongest in Russian language and literature and émigré literature, closely followed by Russian history, Slavic linguistics, and politics for the whole geographic area. Polish, Ukrainian, and Czech and Slovak materials are well represented. Area language materials address a wide range of subjects from Siberian studies and women's studies (including an excellent collection of Russian women writers) to regional politics and environmental studies.

Princeton University Library's Department of Rare Books and Special Collections is also the home of the Osip Mandelstam archive. Mandelstam, one of the best and most beloved poets of twentieth-century Russia continues to be of interest to scholars and researchers worldwide. The personal archive of Father George Florovsky is also part of Princeton's collection. The Cotsen Collection boasts a huge number of Russian and Soviet children's books, including those by Mayakovsky, Marshak, Kharms, Chukovsky, and numerous others.

With these archival collections, currently published research materials in all formats, and solid historical collections, the Russian and Slavic Studies collections support the research and teaching needs of Princeton's interdisciplinary academic community. With the needs of the entire academic community in mind – undergraduate, graduate, faculty and researcher, the Slavic Bibliographer is committed to maintaining and developing a diverse and strong collection.