

Form E-1-A for Boston College Departments/Programs

Department/Program: Eastern, Slavic, and German Studies

Literature Core Assessment SLAV2173/ENGL2228 Twentieth-Century Russian Literature

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

Students read major representative works of Russian literature of the twentieth century. The works encompass all genres: prose, poetry, and drama. Occasionally, students are also exposed to other art forms such as music and visual art. Literary texts are read in various contexts: political, social, and cultural. Students learn important historical events, including but not limited to The Russian Revolution, the Second World War, the Cold War, Thaw, Stagnation, and Perestroika/Glasnost.

Students also pursue the general outcomes stated for all Literature Core courses at Boston College. Literature, a product of the imagination, is a vehicle for understanding human experiences. In this part of the Core program, students read in order to assess the shape and values of their own cultures; to discover alternative ways of looking at the world; to gain insights into issues of permanent importance and contemporary urgency; and to distinguish and appreciate the linguistic and formal satisfactions of literary art.

To read literature critically is to examine the human condition through language's expressive power and to place the reception of literary works in a cultural, historical, and social context. In Literature Core courses, students will be introduced to disciplinary skills including close reading, analysis of texts, and the practice of writing about them with clarity and engagement. Through shared critical and reflective inquiry, students will explore ways in which meaning is textually produced in the world.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your dept major handouts?)

Learning outcomes for Literature Core courses will correspond to those published on the English Department website: <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/english/undergraduate.html>

Additionally, the syllabus contains a detailed statement on the learning outcome.

- 3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

Students write two short papers. The papers are graded for both writing and analysis, and they are returned with detailed comments. The goal is to provide opportunities for formal academic writing and to indicate to the student what is required in terms of close reading and analysis. In addition, there is a midterm as well as a final exam.

- 4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

Two FT faculty in Russian/Slavic literature teach the core courses in Russian literature. These professors assess the outcomes of their students. Changes are made to the curriculum in consultation and in response to student performance and evaluation.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?

The ESGS department conducts regular assessments of its core literature courses. The most recent changes include a more diverse, less Russo-centric reading list. Special emphasis is placed on a broader representation of genres and literary movements, as well as on ethnic and gender diversity of the authors/materials taught. In Spring 2024, several guest lecturers visited the class, including the Ukrainian playwright Sasha Denisova.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

2012

Form E-1-A for Boston College Departments/Programs

Literature Core Assessment SLAV2162/ENGL2227 Classics of Russian Literature

Department/Program: Eastern, Slavic, and German Studies

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

In addition to their in-depth study of representative classics of Russian and Russophone literature within the Russian and world context, students will pursue the general outcomes stated for all Literature Core courses at Boston College. Students read in order to assess the shape and values of their own cultures; to discover alternative ways of looking at the world; to gain insights into issues of permanent importance and contemporary urgency; and to distinguish and appreciate the linguistic and formal satisfactions of literary art.

To read literature critically is to examine the human condition through language's expressive power and to place the reception of literary works in a cultural, historical, and social context. In Literature Core courses, students are introduced to disciplinary skills including close reading, analysis of texts, and the practice of writing about them with clarity and engagement. Through shared critical and reflective inquiry, students explore ways in which meaning is derived from a text and its interpretation.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your dept major handouts?)

Learning outcomes for Literature Core courses will correspond to those published on the English Department website: <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/english/undergraduate.html>

Additionally, the syllabus contains detailed information on the learning outcome.

- 3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

In addition to a midterm and a final exam, students complete two short papers. The exams, which are designed to ensure students' thorough reading of the works, consist of passage identifications and short essays. The papers are graded for both writing and analysis, and they are returned copy-edited, with detailed comments. The goal is to provide an example of formal writing and to indicate to the student what is required in terms of analysis.

- 4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

Core literature courses in Russian literature are taught by the two FT faculty in Russian/Slavic section of ESGS. These professors assess the outcomes of their students. Changes are made to the curriculum in response to discipline trends as well as student performance and evaluation.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?

The ESGS department conducts regular assessments of its core literature courses. Recent changes include a more diverse, less Russo-centric reading list. Additionally, emphasis is placed on a broader representation of genres and literary movements, as well as on ethnic and gender diversity of the authors/materials taught. For example, in Fall 2023, Prof. Tony Lin visited the class to discuss the relationship between music and literature, including musical works inspired by literary texts.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

2012

Form E-1-A for Boston College Departments/Programs

Department/Program: Eastern, Slavic, and German Studies

Arts Core Assessment SLAV2180 From Russia with Love

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

This interdisciplinary course provides an introduction to Russian musical and visual culture from its beginning to today. Students become familiar with sounds and images that represent Russia's contribution to world culture and Russians live by, such as symphonies by Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich as well as paintings by Repin and Chagall. To better understand these works, students consider the artists' aesthetic convictions in the context of several important artistic movements (e.g. Romanticism, Symbolism, the Avant-Garde, and Socialist Realism). Students discuss how and to what extent music and art negotiate the politics of their time. With the goal of developing artistic and musical sensibilities, students build a critical vocabulary to speak about art and music. By the end of the course, students can speak and write intelligently about music and art as well as acquire skills to discern characteristics unique to these works.

This course develops not only students' ability to appreciate art, it also trains them to listen critically. Listening for details is a skill that needs to be practiced and cultivated. Students are introduced to basic music theory that covers: musical elements (harmony, melody, rhythm, timbre), chord progressions, dynamic and expression markings, vocal registers, and instrumentations. Once the foundation is established, students move onto interpretation: why do composer choose a certain tonality and write the melody in a certain way? What is the point of writing a symphony during the Leningrad Blockade, when people are dying of hunger? Through guided listening exercises, students learn about the fascinating world that lies behind abstract musical notes.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your dept major handouts?)

The syllabus contains a detailed statement on the learning outcome. In addition, the learning outcomes correspond to those outlined on the Core website: https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/undergraduate/core-curriculum/core-requirements.html#1_course_in_arts

- 3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

Students are given regular quizzes based on the reading and listening assignments. They complete two essays as well as a final project, designed and carried out in consultation with the instructor. The essays offer students a choice of prompts; students are asked to engage in musical and artistic analyses in connection with their historical contexts. Prior to the quizzes, study guides are distributed to help students navigate a large amount of information (composers, painters, definition of terms, relevant historical events, etc.).

Final projects, which culminated in presentations and a concert at the end of the semester, illustrate the progress students have made during the semester. Students submit a project proposal early on in the semester and refine the project in consultation with the instructor. Progress reports are submitted to make sure students are making good progress. Final projects for this semester include research papers, fiction writing, paintings, studying the relationship between arts and Tik Tok, making a movie inspired by music, and musical performances.

- 4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The professor – who is also a concert pianist – assesses the outcomes. Changes are made to the curriculum in response to student performance and evaluations.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?

At BC, there are courses on Russian literature, history, film, politics, but art and music are conspicuously missing. This course fills a gap that is essential to Russian culture. While the course focuses on music and art, students have pointed out the usefulness in looking at literature and film (the course covers many operas that are based on literary texts), since these art forms influence each other. For example, Eisenstein's film *Alexander Nevsky*, which features Prokofiev's music, was studied. Students appreciate the various formats this course uses: discussions, presentations, musical demonstrations, and mock Stalin Prize committee deliberations.

The list of works and readings will continue to be revised. More writing workshops will be offered in the future to help students complete written assignments. Peer review, scaffolding the assignment into smaller chunks, and revising papers based on the instructor's feedback will be important steps to improve student writing.

In the interest of promoting more collaboration with the Music Department and introducing students to BC's orchestra conductor, Prof. Anna Wittstruck visited the class to give a lecture on Ballets Russes. Students also attended Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* at the Boston Symphony, with a grant from the Institute for the Liberal Arts.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

2020

Form E-1-A for Boston College Departments/Programs

Cultural Diversity Core Assessment SLAV2169 Introduction to Slavic Peoples and Cultures (formerly Slavic Civilizations)

Department/Program: Eastern, Slavic, and German Studies

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

This cultural diversity course introduces students to the history, culture, and languages of the Slavs, the most numerous ethnic and linguistic group in Europe. Students learn elements of the shared culture as well as the unique identities of the Western, the Eastern, and the Southern Slavs. Their learning outcome is based on the study of canonical works of Slavic literature, music, and art. While examining these works, students develop analytical skills and learn how to contextualize art to social and historical experience.

Students in this class develop appreciation of other cultures and ways of life and develop capacity to see the world from the point of view of others. Studying a region that seems remote allows students to examine and compare their own culture, moral concepts, and social values. A critical component of a liberal arts education is the capacity to see human experience from the point of view of others who encounter and interpret the world in significantly different ways. By introducing students to different cultures and examining the concepts of cultural identity and differences, Cultural Diversity courses are aimed at developing students' appreciation of other ways of life and providing a better understanding of their own cultures.

This course has recently been revamped, and the course materials and assessments have been changed to ensure maximum student engagement. For example, in lieu of a final exam, students design a final project in consultation with the instructor. These projects include a family history, Slavic food dishes, a play inspired by Slavic folk characters, and studying Old Church Slavic. The course has become more interdisciplinary; there were film screenings of Polanski's *The Pianist* and Wajda's *Man of Marble*.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your dept major handouts?)

Learning outcomes for Cultural Diversity Core courses correspond to those published on the Core Requirements & Courses website: https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/undergraduate/core-curriculum/core-requirements.html#1_course_in_cultural_diversity

Additionally, the syllabus contains a detailed statement on the learning outcome.

- 3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

Instead of “high-stake exams,” frequent quizzes are given to ensure comprehension and timely reading of materials. Additionally, there are two 3-4 page papers that allow students to further engage with issues and practice formal college-level writing. The papers give students several topics to choose from, and the topics have been checked on ChatGPT to ensure their robustness. One paper is written in class. The papers are graded for content and writing are returned with detailed comments. For the final oral presentation, students present followed by a Q & A session, simulating an academic conference. Each component of the course is designed to ensure fulfillment of learning outcomes. During class discussions, which can be in groups or as a large class, students share their knowledge and understanding and often benefit from each other. Students’ active engagement demonstrates acquisition of individual learning outcomes.

- 4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

Cultural diversity courses in Slavic/Russian are taught by the two FT faculty and one PT faculty. The professor assesses the learning outcomes of students. Changes are made to the curriculum in response to the discipline’s trends (for example, more “decentralized/decolonialized” perspectives and including more non-Russian examples) and student evaluations.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?

Quizzes and papers are graded and returned to students, followed by a general discussion about them in class. Quizzes consist of mostly factual questions, which ensure that students have internalized the material. The performance data is analyzed and taken into account for future improvement of study materials and/or changes in the syllabus. Shorter and more frequent quizzes are implemented rather than longer, high-stake exams to ensure better retention. In Spring 2024, there were visits by Prof. Leon Kogan and Sasha Denisova. Prof. Kogan discussed his experience growing up in the soviet Union, and Ms. Denisova discussed her “documentary theater,” incorporating current events (the war in Ukraine) into her art.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

2023

Form E-1-A for Boston College Departments/Programs

Department/Program: Eastern, Slavic, and German Studies

Cultural Diversity Core Assessment SLAV 2065/SOCY 2280 Society and National Identity in the Balkans

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

In this cultural diversity course, students study aspects of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity among the peoples of the Balkans: Albanians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Croats, Greeks, Jews, Macedonians, Serbs, Slovenes, Romanians, and Turks. They examine the various parameters of identity: linguistic typologies, religious diversity (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Judaism, Islam), culture, and social class. They analyze sources of nationalism and identify reasons for conflicts and war. They examine social experience and value system of the region, which in turn enables them to reflect upon their own culture and background. In the process of learning, students develop appreciation of the Balkan history and culture (which contributed the term “Balkanization” to the American political lexicon) and come to understand the factors for nations’ disintegration.

Students in this class develop appreciation of other cultures and ways of life and develop capacity to see the world from different points of view. A critical component of a liberal arts education is the capacity to see human experience from the point of view of others who encounter and interpret the world in significantly different ways. Courses in Cultural Diversity, by introducing students to different cultures and examining the concepts of cultural identity and cultural differences, are aimed at developing students' appreciation of other ways of life and providing a new understanding of their own cultures.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department’s learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your dept major handouts?)

Learning outcomes for Cultural Diversity Core courses correspond to those published on the Core Requirements & Courses website:

[https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/undergraduate/core-curriculum/core-requirements.html#1 course in cultural diversity](https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/undergraduate/core-curriculum/core-requirements.html#1_course_in_cultural_diversity)

Additionally, the syllabus contains a detailed statement on the learning outcome.

- 3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

Successful completion of this course requires a midterm, a final exam, consistent participation in class discussions, and a class presentation. The exams require students to absorb important historical events and concepts and reflect students' factual comprehension and analytical thinking. Major errors are discussed in class, and then students are asked to correct their own work. Students prepare pre-circulated questions and participate in class discussions, which are designed to measure their learning outcome. Another source of students learning outcome is the individual research, development, and presentation on a topic related to the syllabus.

- 4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

Cultural diversity courses in Slavic/Russian are taught by the two FT faculty and one PT faculty. These professors assess the outcomes of their students. Changes are made in response to student performance and evaluation.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?

Errors or deficiencies in student performance are clearly marked on the exams. The exams are returned for individual corrections and discussed in class. Student projects are evaluated by the instructor before and after presentations in class --before, for better conceptualization of the projects, and after, for clarifications and encouragement. The performance data is analyzed and taken into account for future improvement of study materials and/or changes in the syllabus.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

2012