

Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Nov. 4, 2025

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**DEPARTMENT CHAIR ROBERT LANGSTON TODAY ANNOUNCED RUSSIAN 101,
GIVING STUDENTS A QUICK OPTION FOR LANGUAGE CREDIT**

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Chair of The Germanic and Slavic Languages Department, Robert Langston, today announced the addition of Russian 101 to the department's course offerings, giving students a new, accelerated path to fulfilling their foreign language requirement.

"We're offering Russian 101 on a spring, summer, and fall timeline," said Dr. Langston. "This will allow students to finish their language requirements rather quickly, which I know is a big challenge for some students."

The course is part of GSLL's effort to reframe how students view language learning at Carolina. Langston noted that too often, students see the foreign language requirement as a box to check rather than an opportunity to expand their world.

"Languages like Russian, German, or Yiddish push students to think differently," Langston said. "Even if you're studying literature or culture in translation, you're developing adaptability and cross-cultural communication. They are skills employers consistently value. GSLL courses require no prior language experience and are open to students across majors."

Dr. Langston has a Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literatures. He has publications on German-language prose, poetry, avant-garde and experimental cinema, as well as the visual arts. His leadership has focused on promoting growth of the department and advertisement of the courses offered.

"We want to create an environment where students feel comfortable and confident in all of our courses," said Langston. "I especially think the new professors joining our department are perfect for these goals."

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“RUSSIAN 101” NEW PATH TO CREDIT/ Page 2 of 2

“We want students to know that we offer classes that don’t require knowledge of any language other than English”, said Dr. Langston. “I believe this misconception about our courses can turn students off at times.”

The department is welcoming several new faculty members who are bringing innovative courses to the department. Dr. Trevor Wilson will teach Marxism and Literature and Inventing Central Europe. Dr. Yaakov Herskovitz will offer Yiddish Literature of New York, while Dr. Claire Wolverton will lead The Viking Age. Dr. Julia Wilke will teach Literature and Photography of the 20th Century.

“We want students to know that we offer many classes that don’t require knowledge of any language other than English,” said Langston. “I believe this misconception about our courses can turn students off at times.”

The department plans to launch a communications campaign in November 2025 to raise awareness of these new opportunities. The campaign will highlight the accessibility of GSSL courses, spotlight new faculty members, and promote Russian 101 as an accelerated option for completing the language requirement.

About Dr. Langston:

Dr. Robert Langston is Chair of the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures at UNC-Chapel Hill. He holds a Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literatures and has published on German poetry, avant-garde cinema, and European modernism. He is dedicated to growing the department’s visibility, recruiting new faculty, and creating an inclusive academic community for all UNC students.

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