Какая гадость эта ваша заливная рыба!

Ты на что это, царская морда, намекаешь?

Меня терзают смутные сомнения...

Оставь меня, старушка, я в печали...

Все! Засосало мещанское болото.

Я требую продолжения банкета!

Не учите меня жить, лучше помогите материально.

These and many other famous quotes will stay with you long after you finish this class.

Film has played a significant role in the Soviet culture and continues to be an important cultural expression today. Many Soviet comedies also enriched conversational Russian with unforgettable formulaic expressions and sayings.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF SOVIET/RUSSIAN CINEMATIC ENTERTAINMENT
**COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

You are starting the course at a solid Intermediate level of proficiency as defined by the [American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages](https://www.actfl.org) (ACTFL). The goal of this course is to move you closer to the Advanced level in speaking and listening comprehension. Although we will be working with reading and writing skills, they are not the focus of instruction in this course.

**Advanced Low Speakers at the Advanced Low** sublevel are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks. They are able to participate in most informal and some formal conversations on topics related to school, home, and leisure activities. They can also speak about some topics related to employment, current events, and matters of public and community interest. Advanced Low speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future in paragraph-length discourse with some control of aspect. In these narrations and descriptions, Advanced Low speakers combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length, although these narrations and descriptions tend to be handled separately rather than interwoven. They can handle appropriately the essential linguistic challenges presented by a complication or an unexpected turn of events. Responses produced by Advanced Low speakers are typically not longer than a single paragraph. The speaker’s dominant language may be evident in the use of false cognates, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of that language. At times their discourse may be minimal for the level, marked by an irregular flow, and containing noticeable self-correction. More generally, the performance of Advanced Low speakers tends to be uneven. Advanced Low speech is typically marked by a certain grammatical roughness (e.g., inconsistent control of verb endings), but the overall performance of the Advanced-level tasks is sustained, albeit minimally. The vocabulary of Advanced Low speakers often lacks specificity. Nevertheless, Advanced Low speakers are able to use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution. Advanced Low speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. Their speech can be understood by
native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even though this may require some repetition or restatement.

More specifically, by the end of the course you will have practiced and should be able to
- narrate an event, producing at least a paragraph;
- describe people, places and things, producing at least a paragraph;
- compare and contrast or highlight similarity of various phenomena;
- express your opinion in a native-like way and be able to argue your point, albeit in a minimal way.

In the realm of language structure, you will dramatically increase your vocabulary (a least a 50% increase), learn grammatical nuances of expressing certain concepts in Russian (e.g., expressing necessity and obligation, emotions, having/not having, trying/attempting, etc.) as well as new syntactic constructions which will allow you to create paragraph-length discourse (concession clauses, relative clauses, clauses of purpose, conditionals).

Learning a language always contains within it a cultural component. You will be exposed to some of the best examples of Soviet/Russian cinematography. The films you will be watching have influenced generations of Russian speakers and continue to be some of the most watched films today. These films explore some of the universal themes of love, pursuit of happiness, professional recognition, betrayal and friendship that are situated in a Russian-speaking context, reflecting the cultural attitudes and ethos.

MATERIALS
All of the films which are required for the course are on LATTE. You will notice also that there are many other films there – this is for the convenience of your final project (see Final Project below). It will be the students’ responsibility to watch all assigned movies in advance of the class.

Cinema for Russian Conversation, Volume 1 by Mara Kashper, Olga Kagan and Yuliya Morozova is required for this class and is available through Brandeis Bookstore.

SYLLABUS (ПЛАН РАБОТЫ)
There is a general time-line for the entire semester which allots 4 class periods for each movie (i.e., we will be able to work with 4 films). This time-line is flexible and may be changed, depending on how well we work in class and at home. The movies I planned to watch may also change. Please pay attention in class to any announcement regarding possible changes to the timeline.

There will be a work plan for each movie. It is your responsibility to print a copy of the work plan from LATTE or to use it electronically on the website. These work plans are also flexible and may change. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out if there were any changes made. Likewise, if you miss a class, you are expected to keep up with the syllabus and come to the next class prepared.
GRADING
Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

25% - Preparation and Participation
15% - Written homework
15% - Oral homework (uploading files on LATTE)
10% - Lexico-grammatical journal
10% - Quizzes
10% - Midterm evaluation (oral)
15% - Final Projects (written and oral component)

Grading Scale

94-100 = A  74-76 = C
90-93 = A-  70-73 = C-
87-89 = B+  67-69 = D+
84-86 = B   64-66 = D
80-83 = B-  60-63 = D-
77-79 = C+  59 and below = F

Preparation and Participation
Class will be conducted entirely in Russian. However, in order to help you activate the new vocabulary, you will be doing some translation to and from English.

You will receive a daily participation grade (because in a language course it is not enough to be just present. You must be active during the entire class):

5+, 5, 5- or 4+  Well prepared (i.e., have done the homework and is prepared to work with new grammatical material and vocabulary in class) and actively participates; comes to class on time
4 or 4-      A actively participates, but may not be prepared (or was significantly late)
3           Not prepared, and/or makes little effort to participate
No credit    Absent (or was more than 20 minutes late)

Please note that more than four absences will result in the lowering of your final grade in the “Preparation and Participation” category: (5 absences earn you a “B+”, 6-7 absences – “B”, 8 absences – “B-”, etc.).
Classroom policies

**Punctuality** is essential. Therefore, only an occasional late arrival will be accepted.

**Cell phones**: The use of cell phones in class is strictly prohibited. That means no text-messaging either! Phones should be turned off and out of sight while class is in session.

Please **NO eating** during class.

**Homework**
You will be responsible for viewing the films prior to the class period for which they are assigned, and completing grammar and vocabulary exercises for each assignment. Homework must be submitted on the day it is due and will be returned to students at the following class period in most cases. If you know that you will not be able to make it to class, submit your homework in advance or arrange for a friend to hand it in for you.

You must be prepared to discuss the movies in class. **Three or more missed homework assignments** will lower your final grade in “Homework” category by one letter (5 missed homeworks will earn you a “B+”, 4-5 missed homeworks – “B”, 7 missed homeworks – “B-“, etc.). Homework which is more than 2 class periods (one week) late will be accepted, but you will not receive any credit.

Some homework will involve vocabulary memorization. You should plan on setting aside some time each day for memorization work.

Homework is evaluated based on the usual grade scale (see above).

**Nota Bene**: Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend between 8 and 10 hours per week in preparation for class (written homework, preparing for oral assignments, memorizing vocabulary, preparing for quizzes).

Moreover, studies show that students who do not do language homework on a regular basis, do not perform well on exams, no matter how much they study the night before.

**Lexico-grammatical journal**
For the proficiency growth to happen, you need to pursue vocabulary acquisition with active energy. It is not enough to hear or see a word once. You must use it in a sentence, written or oral, learn its morphological structure (root, prefix, suffix), know its synonyms and antonyms and its contextual “neighbors.” To help you in your proficiency growth, you are now required to keep a **Лексико-грамматический журнал**, where you will write down new lexico-
grammatical items. You are expected to record at least 20 words per week and use at least 5 of them in a sentence. Journals will be collected three times per semester for a credit/no credit evaluation.

**Quizzes and Midterm Evaluation**
There will be regular quizzes over selected vocabulary items and grammar/syntax concepts. You will have an oral Midterm evaluation at the end of October. You will receive specific instructions on how to prepare for quizzes and for the Midterm.

**Final Project**
For your Final Project you will have an opportunity to choose a movie of interest to you and present this movie to the rest of the class. For your convenience I have included several award-winning and simply popular films to our LATTE page. The direction of your presentation is also subject to your interests: you may choose to present a movie in a critical way (i.e., discuss the work of the camera, director’s decisions, actors’ play), compare two or three Soviet/Russian movies of the same genre or conduct a cross-cultural comparison of an American and a Russian film of the same genre. There will be a written and an oral part in the Final project. To complete your Final Project successfully, you will be required to do additional research outside class time. This research can be carried out in English; however, all presentations must be done in Russian. You will receive more detailed instructions for the Final Project by mid-semester.