Welcome to the wonderful world of the Russian language! You are starting your journey in a 2-semester sequence “Beginning Russian”!

**Course Description**
An engaging textbook and accompanying video serve as a lively introduction to the basic building blocks of the Russian language and Russian cultural norms. By the end of the academic year, you will be able to talk about yourselves, your families, your academic lives, your interests and hobbies with a relative degree of ease because you will have a working vocabulary of about 1,000 words, familiarity with a number of conversational topics, and a systematic understanding of the elementary Russian grammar.
Learning Goals for Beginning Russian I

After completing Beginning Russian 10, you will be able to:

- Make introductions and get acquainted with others
- Talk about yourself, your family, and friends by providing a basic description
- Read simple authentic texts for basic facts
- Embark on shopping expeditions and place orders in cafes and restaurants
- Describe routine activities and interests
- Ask for and express opinions and feelings about things, people, events
- Complain about your workload
- Compliment your friends on their successes
- Make plans and issue invitations for future gatherings
- Ask and answer questions directed at you about a number of familiar topics
- Read short authentic texts & messages and understand their main idea/purpose (e-mails, advertisements, short personal letters, etc.)
- Fill out forms in Russian with basic biographical information; write out lists, short messages, postcards, and simple notes.

You will also know and comprehend the following:

Grammar
- part of the nominal, pronominal and adjectival declension system (4 out of 6 cases!)
- one-stem Russian verb system which will allow you to conjugate any verb (!)
- past and present tenses (that’s two out of three!)
- expressions of possession
- expression of a direct object
- superlative degree of adjectives

Culture
- some facts and names pertaining to Russian and Soviet “high” culture
- sociocultural norms of interpersonal communication
- some basic facts about Russian and Soviet social history which shape the way Russians think about themselves and the others

Connections to other disciplines
- history
- anthropology
- literature
- geography

Required Materials
The textbook is *Russian Stage One: Live From Moscow*, and comes with a workbook, CD and DVD (the disks are located inside the textbook and workbook covers). We need VOLUME I
for the first semester of Beginning Russian (i.e., Russ 10); we will need volume II for the second semester of Beginning Russian (i.e., Russ 20).

Volume I consists of 6 units; we will finish 5 this semester. We will resume in the spring with unit 6 of the 1st volume and then will start Volume II. Each unit consists of 9 days, each of which corresponds to one class period. The workbook clearly indicates the homework that goes with a particular day in a particular unit. We will frequently combine two days into one class period and/or you will have two days worth of homework to complete, especially between a Friday and a Monday class. **You will receive a detailed unit work plan at the beginning of each new unit.**

**Classroom policies**

**Behavior:** You are expected to contribute to a respectful and positive learning environment. Please do not bring food to class as much as it can be helped. You should be able to finish your lunch either before or after class. It is hard to practice a foreign language while your mouth is busy with food.

**Punctuality** is essential.

**Cell phones:** I rely on your maturity to know that the use of cell phones in class for any reason is disrespectful and distracting. Phones should be turned off and out of sight while class is in session.

**Communication:** Please make sure your Brandeis e-mail address is active and check it regularly. I will communicate a lot of important information about the course to you via the Course Announcement function on our LATTE page or by direct e-mailing. Again, I rely on your maturity and respect for this course to maintain an open channel of communication with your instructors throughout the semester.

**Group Dynamics**

This class relies heavily on all of you working together. Some of you are faster at grasping new grammatical concepts and memorizing new vocabulary while others require more time to process language information. Personality types also play a huge role in how people learn languages: some are afraid to speak in front of other people and are very shy; others are more outgoing and are not afraid of experimenting and taking chances. Please be patient with each other and be polite. The important thing to keep in mind is that you NEED each other to activate what you have learned at home. Be grateful for the fact that you have “comrades in arms” in your conquest of the Russian language!

**Notice of Accommodation**

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.
Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- **Preparation and Participation (about 20%)**
  - 48 classes out of 52 possible x 5 pts each = 240 points

- **Recitation Participation (about 5%)**
  - 10 recitations out of 12 possible x 5 pts each = 50 points

- **Homework (about 25%)**
  - 46 out of 52 possible x 5 pts each = 230 points,
  - including Culture Hunts (10 out of 12 x 2 points each = 20 points)

- **Weekly quizzes (about 10%)**
  - 20 quizzes x 5 points each = 100 points

Assessment: regular grading scale
- **Unit tests (about 15%)** – 4 total
- **Mid-term Integrated Performance Assessment (10%)**
- **Final Integrated Performance Assessment (15%)**

**Grading Scale**

94-100 = A
90-93 = A-
87-89 = B+
84-86 = B
80-83 = B-
77-79 = C+
74-76 = C
70-73 = C-

**Components of Course Work**

The text below explains in detail what you are expected to do in this course and how you will be graded. But I invite you to think more about developing your proficiency in the language rather than focusing on the mechanics of the grade. The ultimate goal for you and for me is to give you an ability to communicate in a different language!

*Preparation and Participation (240 points; about 20% of the final grade)*

You must hear Russian and use Russian in order to learn Russian. Therefore, it is essential that students attend classes and keep up with course work on a daily basis. Moreover, students who come to class unprepared, fall behind very quickly and hold up the rest of the
class. Therefore, coming to every class and preparing for each lesson is essential not only to your learning, but also to the learning of your peers. Just being in class is not enough to gain proficiency in the language. You need to be active and engaged. **When you are assigned to do an exercise with a partner, please stay away from chatting in English.** Focus on your Russian instead! Your participation will be marked on a very simple scale:

5 points | 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
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0 points | not prepared (have not watched the Flipped Classroom videos, have not done the homework, does not know new words) and, as a result, participation is minimal

On rare occasions, I may consider giving partial credit (2.5 points).

Please note that you are all allowed to miss up to 4 classes for whatever reason without penalty. The total score for participation already takes that into account. I do not start giving participation scores until the 3rd day of the semester.

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**Recitation Hour (50 points; about 5% of the total grade)**
This course requires that you attend one additional hour of class per week. It is called the “Recitation hour”, which in a language-learning course means that you will practice phonetics, do selected homework exercises together, practice conversation, prepare for oral exams, and have an extra opportunity to work with authentic language and culture materials. It is a great benefit to your language development as it gives you lots of opportunities to practice your language outside of classroom, to work on your pronunciation and to learn more about the culture of the language. Recitations will also be reserved for short weekly vocabulary quizzes. **You will be responsible for all new words in the previous week (as they come up in the textbook and the workbook).**

The exact time for the recitation will be scheduled at the beginning of the semester by common consent. However, the suggestion is that recitation hour shall be scheduled for Mondays 7:00 – 7:50 p.m. Recitations will start **the week of September 3**. There will be a total of 12 recitations. You must participate at least 10 recitations to receive the full credit for this portion of the final grade.

Please note that your participation in the Recitation Hour is mandatory and important for the same reasons as attendance and participation of regular class sessions. It is subject to the same participation and classroom policy as the attendance of the regular sessions of the class. You will receive a participation grade for each recitation hour: 5 points for being fully engaged or 0 points for anything less than fully engaged. On rare occasions we will consider giving half the grade (2.5 points) for recitation participation.
**Homework (230 points + 20 points for Culture Hunts; about 25% of the total grade)**

Homework consists of two parts:

a) appropriate pages from the Workbook (sold with the textbook) for written exercises,

AND

b) on certain days studying the assigned grammatical material ahead of the lesson by watching instructional videos posted on LATTE. The goal of studying grammatical material explicitly prior to the lesson is to give you a chance to **develop a conceptual understanding of the grammatical material on your own time** so that we can dedicate a bigger portion of class time to actual language usage. This practice is known as the Flipped Model. It allows for a greater individualization of learning and is one of the more effective innovative approaches to teaching such morphologically complex languages as Russian.

**Please note that both parts of the homework are mandatory.** Written homework will receive a score in the homework category while the grade for viewing the videos will be reflected in your daily participation score (if you have not watched the assigned instructional videos at home, you won’t be able to participate in class).

Homework **must be submitted on the day** when it is due and will be returned to you on the following day 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 some other method to turn it in.

Expectations for the homework are the following:

a) work is turned in on time and at any rate, no later than one week after the due date;

b) work is complete (all assigned exercises are done);

c) it is at least 90% correct, and

d) there are no systematic errors which would indicate that re-learning and re-focusing is required.

There are three possible scores you may receive for your homework:

- **Full credit – 5 points**
  - if your work meets the expectations outlined above.

- **No credit – 0 points**
  - for homework that is late by more than a week.

- **Partial credit – 2.5 points**
if your homework does not meet expectations, you will receive a "v-“, which means that you will need to correct all circled mistakes and re-submit the work NO LATER THAN THE END OF THE UNIT. Full credit (5 points) will be given only when all corrections are made and the work is re-submitted. If you do not submit your corrections, you will receive partial credit. Only one re-submission is allowed.

Please note:
• Homework which is more than a week late will be accepted and checked for errors, but you will NOT receive any credit for it. No resubmissions will be allowed for late homework

• Corrections/resubmissions must be received by the last day of the unit (usually, the unit test day). Homework resubmitted after the unit test will be accepted, but you will receive only partial credit.

Culture Hunts: starting in the 3rd week of the semester, you will receive a weekly set of questions on Russian culture or history (in English). These questions may include points about social and high culture and/or linguistics (for example, why is the Russian alphabet called “Cyrillic”?). You can explore the Internet resources, ask your Russian friends or go to the library. You are not allowed to simply copy the material from the Internet (e.g., Wikipedia articles); you must use your own words in your answers. Please indicate the source of your information for every answer.

There will be 12 Culture Hunts total in the semester; you need to complete 10 for a full credit. Each completed Culture Hunt will earn you 2 points (full credit). If you do not submit a culture hunt, you will receive zero points. There will be no other scores for this task.

Nota Bene*: Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend 10-12 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (written homework, instructional videos, research for culture hunts, preparation for quizzes and exams).

Moreover, scientific 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.

(*Nota Bene is Latin for “Note well,” i.e., please take a note)

Vocabulary and Grammar Quizzes (100 points; about 10% of the total grade)
You will have weekly vocabulary and grammar quizzes. Vocabulary quizzes will be every Recitation, beginning on September 17th. Grammar quizzes will be every Friday. The
quizzes are short – no more than 10 minutes.

Vocabulary quizzes will have the following format: “list as many items of clothing as possible, at least 10 different items for a full credit.” You should expect to be quizzed on any material that was covered in class up to the day of the Recitation. In most cases, you will have the words, which you are responsible for, listed on the chapter syllabus. However, you are expected to be proactive in learning the vocabulary as it comes up in the unit. In order to help you deal with learning the words in a more efficient and effective manner, we created sets of vocabulary cards on Quizlet, with links posted on LATTE.

Grammar quizzes may be of several types: fill-in-the-blank, use the words in parenthesis to complete a sentence, supply the missing endings, translate the following phrases/sentences. In most cases, you will have grammatical concepts, for which you are responsible on a particular quiz, listed on the chapter syllabus. However, you are expected to be proactive in learning grammatical rules as they come up.

There will be a total of 20 quizzes this semester: 2 each week starting in the second week of classes. There are three possible scores you may receive on a quiz:

- **Full credit – 5 points**
  - if your work meets the expectations of being at least 90% correct.

- **Partial credit – 2.5 points**
  - if your work is below expectations (80-89% range of correctness) but still has some substance

- **No credit – 0 points**
  - for missed quizzes or for work that has little substance (e.g. you remembered only 2 words from the list of clothing items or could fill in only 1 out of 5 missing endings)

*Extra credit for co-curricular and extra-curricular events*

The Russian language program and other Brandeis programs/departments/ institutes organize a number of events on campus throughout the academic year which focus on Russia and the Russophone world. These include lectures by Brandeis University faculty or by guest speakers outside the university, Russian Club events and, very importantly, Russian Teas. You can receive significant extra credit for attending these events. For example, you can cover the “zeros” for up to 4 missed classes or up to 4 missed homeworks or a combination of the two categories. In order to receive this credit, you will need to fill out a form (see LATTE) and write a summary of the event and a short reflection on what you’ve learned at the event.
Assessment: regular grading scale

*Unit Tests (15%)*
A fifty-minute written test will be scheduled at the end of each unit. Each Unit Test will have an oral component. The oral part will be administered either during the Recitation hour or outside of class (you will do a video recording). Tests will be graded on a percentage scale (the highest possible score is 100%).

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**Important note about unit tests:** Your tests will be checked for mistakes. All problems in the learned material will be circled, but not corrected. The next class period you will have 5 minutes to correct your mistakes in a different color ink. If you miss that class, you miss the opportunity to correct mistakes. Your grade will be based on the corrections you made.

Tests are treated as summative assessments: you are receiving grades (rather than score) for them.

*Mid-term (10%) and Final (15%): Integrated Performance Assessments*
These assessments are designed to be part of the learning cycle where feedback plays a significant role in a learner’s development. The method is called Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA). It is a ‘cluster assessment’ featuring three tasks, each of which reflects one of the three modes of communication – interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. The tasks are interrelated and are aligned within a single overarching theme or content area (e.g., Famous Person, Daily Schedules, etc.). Each IPA assessment will start with an interpretive task where you will read or listen to some text and they will be asked to answer comprehension questions. You will proceed to the interpersonal task, which will be based on the topic of the text you worked with in the interpretive task. The final portion of the task will have to do either with presentational speaking (making a short presentation) or writing (a short essay) on the topic of the text.

Each IPA assessment will take at least two days and will be based on all of the material covered up to that point. You will have many opportunities to practice the tasks of the IPA throughout the semester.

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**What to do if you need extra help**

Please do not wait until problems start piling up. There are three people in the Russian language program you can turn to for help: your instructors and BUGS tutor. You can come to any of us with your questions, but it also may be helpful to differentiate your sources of support.

If you need another explanation of a particular concept or want to practice vocabulary, pronunciation, conversation, seek help from your instructor (Irina Evgenievna Dubinina) during office hours or by appointment. Please use the
following google drive document to sign-up for a meeting:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1otQK0t3QzCpGaKxl4tIp-xD6YOL-XuHVEZsXplcC1g0/edit?usp=sharing -
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1otQK0t3QzCpGaKxl4tIp-xD6YOL-XuHVEZsXplcC1g0/edit?usp=sharing

If you would like extra structured practice, seek help from Recitation Hour instructor (Elizaveta (Liza) Repina) during her office hours. Please use the following google drive document to sign-up for a meeting:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xwCtgHiKHnBs1QwuiiLV19AQ3l48Mf2iQvuBnL7GYx0/edit -
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xwCtgHiKHnBs1QwuiiLV19AQ3l48Mf2iQvuBnL7GYx0/edit%23gid=0

If you would like somebody to help you learn vocabulary, practice pronunciation, quiz you in preparation for a test, check your homework, make an appointment with Russian language BUGS tutor (TBA).

Other Useful Contacts
The Russian program’s Undergraduate Representatives for the 2018-2019 academic year are Ivy Hardy (idonley@brandeis.edu). She plans to major in Russian Studies and IGS. The UDR can answer your questions about choosing a Russian major or minor, professors in the Russian program, etc.

Information on Russia-related Events on Campus
There are two list-serves you may want to join.
1) Brandeis has a very active Russian Club. If you are interested in participating in events organized by the club, please sign up for their e-mail list. (Find them on the Brandeis website)
2) If you are interested in receiving messages with announcements about Russian language and culture related events as well as about courses offered in the Russian Studies program, please sign up for the Russian list serve (put your e-mail on the Bio Info Form)

Links to these listserves are also available at the program’s website:
http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/grall/russian/

Study-Abroad and Other Related Opportunities
Brandeis has a number of approved programs for studying Russian in the Russian Federation. You will be able to choose between summer programs, semester-long and year-long programs. Brandeis Russian Language Program recommends that you have at least 4 semesters of Russian before a study-abroad program. You are well on your way toward this goal! If you are interested in going abroad, please talk to your instructor and
visit the Study Abroad office. There are also several summer intensive Russian language programs in the U.S. The Russian program’s website lists a few of them. If you would like to know more about these programs, please talk to your instructor.

Statement on Brandeis Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person, be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner, without proper acknowledgement of that source.

Violations of University policies on academic integrity, described in Section Three of Rights and Responsibilities, may result in failure of the course or on the assignment, or in suspension or dismissal from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, it is your responsibility to ask your instructor for clarification.

Statement on Success
Success in this course depends heavily on your personal health and well-being. Recognize that stress is an expected part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected setback or life changes outside the classroom. Your other professors and I strongly encourage you to reframe challenges as unavoidable pathways to success. Reflect on your role in taking care of yourself throughout the academic year, before the demands of exams and projects reach their peak. Please feel free to reach out to me about difficulties you may be having that may impact your performance in this course as soon as it occurs and before it becomes too overwhelming.