

Structure of Russian I: Sounds and Inflections - Spring 2006

Instructor: Oscar Swan, 1417 CL

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:00-1:50 or by appointment:
624-5707 or swan@pitt.edu (feel free to ask questions by e-mail)

Course Meets: Tuesdays 2:30-3:45 and Thursdays 5:00-6:15, in 1221 CL

Required Materials

O. Swan, *Russian Sounds and Inflections* (forthcoming: Slavica). The textbook is available on the University's courseweb site, under Course Materials. You are automatically enrolled on this site, and you may print the textbook out chapter by chapter.

Any good Russian dictionary: Ozhegov, Katzner, or Oxford are all acceptable.

Highly recommended: either

A. Timberlake, 2004 *A Reference Grammar of Russian* (Cambridge University Press)

T. Wade. 1992. *A Comprehensive Russian Grammar* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers)

Course Website: <<http://courseweb.pitt.edu>> (then log in).

Course Overview. This course comprises an overall examination of Russian sounds and inflections, and the inter-relationships of these two structural levels. Course material addresses especially the point of view of the prospective teacher of the language and questions that commonly arise in the Russian language classroom. The person who completes this course will gain practical mastery in Russian inflection, as well as the ability to describe and explain inflectional problems to learners of the language.

The course is term-heavy, in that the student will be expected to become acquainted with the key descriptive terms and concepts of phonology and morphology: both their definitions and practical application. Following an examination of Russian phonemics, phonetics, and morphophonemics, we will undertake a systematic examination of Russian declension and conjugation, following by and large the order of presentation in the book. We will tend to skip over things which are familiar and spend more time on topics which may not have been previously encountered. For example, in noun declension, we will assume that the course participant is conversant with declensional endings, but less so with stress patterns or mobile vowel description.

Assignments. A topic-by-topic outline accompanies this syllabus. Specific assignments, including written assignments, will be given from one class to another, and may differ from items in the outline. For this reason, attendance at all classes is important.

Class Project. A class project will consist of a research project involving field work (i.e., not so much library research but rather an investigation involving the use of native Russian speakers), during the course of which the student will examine some area of contemporary Russian phonology or morphology inadequately described in reference works, scholarly journals, or the course textbook. The project will consist of two parts: first, a presentation to the class of the project and any foreseen problems, and, second, a five-to-ten page paper summarizing the project, due the last week of class.

Grading. There will be a Midterm and a Final Examination, and possible quizzes (both announced and unannounced). The final grade will be determined as follows: midterm 25%, quizzes and class participation 25%, presentation 25%, final 25%.