

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, formerly known as Slavic Civilizations, has been revamped 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 detailed learning outcomes.

- 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 against ChatGPT to ensure their robustness (so that it’s difficult to cheat). One paper is written in class. The papers are graded for both content and style and are returned with detailed comments. For the final project, students make oral presentations 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 Fall 2025, there were visits by puppeteer Evgeny Ibragimov as well as trips to Jordan Hall for a Rachmaninoff concert.

- 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 Core Curriculum

Department/Program Eastern, Slavic, & Germanic Studies / Program in Linguistics

Note: I am completing this form with reference to the course Ling2379/ Engl2132 / Socy2275 *Language & Ethnicity*, which offers Cultural Diversity credit, offered Spring 2025

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

Below are the learning outcomes articulated for the course in Spring 2025

- Experience reflecting on their own ethnolinguistic life histories, alongside an appreciation of how members of other speech communities may have experiences very different from their own
- Capacity to explain the historical, social, and linguistic factors that have given rise to linguistic variation in twenty-first century United States
- The ability to identify and articulate, in fine detail, how selected communities of contemporary Americans construct their social identities through their use of English phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and pragmatic resources
- Understanding of how modern sociolinguistics studies human linguistic variation, and what this study offers to educators, policy-makers, and citizens in a diverse political body
- Familiarity with both sides of on-going public debates about language, such as those regarding language endangerment and bilingual education
- Modest control over the conventions of the International Phonetic Alphabet

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

These learning outcomes are specified in the course syllabus, made available to the institution at large through online publication, and distributed to students through posting on Canvas. We cycle back through them throughout the course and return to them in the last day of class

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

(1) At mid-semester, students complete an informal course assessment in which they are invited to reflect on their progress in the direction of the course goals. A digest of those pooled data are discussed in class, and inform the subsequent direction of the course.

(2) Linguistics majors can elect to present texts they created for this class as an example of their best work in the discipline on the occasion of their senior departmental Colloquium

(3) The instructor extensively comments on four papers produced by students (c. 4–5 pages each). In addition to comments directed to specific students, I post on Canvas general feedback to the class following the return of assignments. I comment individually on mid-term exams, and also post further discussion of the exercise and occasionally samples of student-produced ideal responses. Final exams are comprehensive of the full course, and graded but not returned to students. They are retained as a permanent record of the group's accomplishments

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 instructor interprets informal evidence for student achievement gathered at mid-semester. The Chair of the Department and other faculty members teaching in linguistics serve a consultative role as needed. In addition, student course evaluations are carried out every year at the end of the semester. Summaries are available to both the Chair of the Department and to the Departments of English and of Sociology, where the course is cross-registered. The instructor retains the full content of the course evaluations, including narrative responses to questions which probe students' self-evaluations of course goals

My new colleague, Chris Geissler, and I have met weekly throughout this past year to discuss revisions to our curriculum. We also have been visiting each other's classes and providing mutual feedback

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?)

Assessment findings indicated that the course exceeded students' expectations. Student evaluations led to some minor changes in focus and pace, but overall student satisfaction was high

During the pandemic year of 2021, I added an optional ethno-musicological component to the course, and have since retained it in response to overwhelming student pleasure

Moreover, during the 2017–8 school year, I revised the course to add a component of reflection on what it means to go beyond '(mere) tolerance' of language difference to the goal of building a national consensus that expands community ownership and appreciation of language

difference. I have elaborated on this point in each iteration of the course since 2018. President Trump's 1 March 2025 Executive Order declaring English to be the Official Language of the United States became the object of explicit analysis and debate in the last two weeks of the semester

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

Our latest departmental review occurred in 2012, and included review of each of the courses we offer.

Form completed by Margaret Thomas, 20 May 2025

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 two FT and one PT 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

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 and Russophone literature of the twentieth century. The works encompass all genres: prose, poetry, and drama. Students are frequently exposed to other art forms such as music, film, 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 detailed learning outcomes.

- 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 papers. The papers are graded for both content and style, and they are returned with detailed comments. Students may revise one paper for a higher grade; the difference between revision and proofreading is emphasized. 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, which are both done in class.

- 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 and one PT 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 to reflect disciplinary trends and 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?

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 2025, there was an invited talk on Vladimir Sorokin by Prof. Tatiana Filimonova of Dartmouth College.

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

2012