

## Yale Slavic Graduate Program

Yale University's Slavic Department is one of the most dynamic in the United States and takes great pride in the creative and forward-thinking scholarship of its faculty and students. Our graduate program values interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives on Russian, East European, and Eurasian literatures and cultures. While maintaining a foundation in the study and teaching of language and literature, the Department sees both as embedded in a global context and a broad network of cultural production. In coursework, exams, professional training, mentoring, and intellectual life, our graduate program seeks to provide its students with the knowledge, skills, and vision to become engaged, innovative Slavists and Eurasianists for the twenty-first century.

The faculty members of the Yale Slavic Department have been recognized internationally for their teaching and research. With deep and evolving connections to comparative literature, art history, film and media studies, history and the social sciences, gender and sexuality studies, and the digital humanities, the faculty are actively engaged in integrating Slavic studies into the diverse communities and conversations of the academic and public spheres. Many opportunities for such integration within Yale are provided by the [Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies Program of the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies](#), but also by the uniquely collaborative culture of the university's faculty and institutions. The Slavic graduate program also benefits from the many resources of the university: from Yale's renowned strengths in the humanities to the rich collections of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Sterling Memorial Library (and its [Slavic, East European and Central Asian Collection](#)), and the Yale University Art Gallery. Our expansive approach to Slavic studies is reflected in the impressive range of our graduate students' research fields and [dissertations](#), as well as the many professional achievements of our [alumni](#).

### *Ph.D. Tracks and Interdisciplinary Programs*

In line with our particular strengths in the interdisciplinary study of Russian culture, the Department offers a range of options for the Ph.D. degree. Our primary track is the Ph.D. in Russian literature and culture, with a strong emphasis on transnational and transmedial approaches. The Department also offers a [combined degree in Slavic Languages and Literatures and Film and Media Studies](#). By special arrangement, the Department will consider individualized ad hoc programs with other departments. Students interested in pursuing such a degree are encouraged to speak with the Slavic Director of Graduate Studies at the time of application or early in the program.

Yale University makes available to graduate students several certificate programs, such as Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Film and Media Studies, Translation Studies, Environmental Humanities, or the MacMillan Center's Councils on African, European, Latin American and Iberian, and Middle East Studies. Graduate students can also receive a Certificate of College Teaching Preparation or a Certificate in Second Language Acquisition. For a complete list of certificate programs, see the [website for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences](#).

### *Applying to the Yale Slavic Department*

For more information about applying for graduate study at Yale, see the [website for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences](#). Specific questions about the Slavic Department and its graduate program can be directed to the Slavic Director of Graduate Studies.

## **The Ph.D. in Russian Literature and Culture**

### *General Timeline and Funding*

The Ph.D. in Russian Literature and Culture has been designed to be completed in five to six years. The general timeline is as follows:

Year One	Coursework
Year Two	Coursework
Year Three	Examinations and dissertation prospectus First year of teaching
Year Four	Dissertation Second year of teaching
Year Five	Dissertation
Optional Year Six	Dissertation Teaching

If students remain in good academic standing and are making appropriate progress toward degree completion, funding is guaranteed by the Graduate School through the sixth year. However, students are encouraged to apply for external fellowships at any point in the program, especially in the sixth year when such awards can facilitate increased time for dissertation completion and confer considerable professional prestige. For more information on typical funding packages and fellowship opportunities, see the [website for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences](#). The Slavic Graduate Student Advisory Committee also maintains an up-to-date list of fellowships and funding resources for the benefit of the graduate student community.

### *Advising Structure*

During the first three years of graduate study (until admission to candidacy), the primary academic adviser for each graduate student is the Slavic Director of Graduate Studies. However, students are encouraged to seek out one or more mentors to consult about course selection and other matters of professionalization. Mentors from outside the department may contribute through the minor field requirement or by participating in the prospectus process. After being admitted to candidacy, the chair of the dissertation committee will serve as the student's primary adviser in intellectual and professional matters, and will work in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies on relevant advising issues as well as the logistics of program completion (dissertation progress and submission, applying for jobs, etc.). See section, "General Guidelines for Advising the Prospectus and Dissertation," for more on advising. Other resources on graduate advising are included on the [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website](#).

### *Language Competency and Expectations*

In recognition of the multilingual nature of our community and our scholarship, as well as the critical position of language pedagogy within our discipline, the Department places special emphasis on the rigorous study of languages. The Department understands that fluency in any language is more than a series of exams; it is a lifelong process. Students are, therefore, encouraged to attend to their language proficiencies regularly and with seriousness, both before and after fulfilling the program's specific requirements.

All entering students are expected to have sufficient knowledge of Russian to allow for satisfactory work at the graduate level and are required to pass a departmental proficiency examination in Russian. If needed, students are expected to augment their language proficiency with summer study, undergraduate classes, or individualized tutorials.

Students must also demonstrate competence in a second foreign language, as soon as possible or by the beginning of the fifth term of study. Students may choose to pursue proficiency in a second Slavic language; in a language useful for broader access to scholarship (often German or French in past years); in another relevant Eastern European or Eurasian language; or in any language relevant for well-motivated comparative work. Competence in a second foreign language may be demonstrated by taking an undergraduate content course at or above L5, taking a graduate seminar conducted wholly in the target language, or passing a reading examination in the chosen language to be administered by faculty with expertise in that language and in consultation with the Slavic Director of Graduate Studies. The student may also petition the Slavic faculty through the Director of Graduate Studies to fulfill the requirement through alternative means.

### *Course Requirements*

All graduate students are required to take sixteen courses in their first two years of graduate study. Students are strongly encouraged to take ownership over their individualized programs of study and to explore diverse options both within and outside the Slavic Department. Students who have done graduate work elsewhere may petition for up to three courses to count toward degree requirements, and may use any course slots freed through prior study to take additional elective courses at Yale. Language courses do not count toward the required sixteen courses.

All graduate students pursuing the Ph.D. in Russian Literature and Culture must take "Proseminar: Theory and Methods" (RUSS 951). In addition to this one mandatory course, all students must fulfill the following distributional requirements through graduate-level coursework:

- Minimum of one course on Slavic literature or culture before the eighteenth century
- Minimum of one course on eighteenth-century Slavic literature or culture
- Minimum of two courses on nineteenth-century Slavic literature or culture
- Minimum of two courses on twentieth-century Slavic literature or culture
- Minimum of one course on twenty-first-century Slavic literature or culture
- Minimum of two (but no more than four out of the required sixteen) courses outside the Slavic Department.

In the event that a course is not obviously dedicated to one of the centuries listed above or moves between centuries, students may petition the Director of Graduate Studies to count the course for

a particular distributional requirement, which will typically entail writing the final paper or other capstone project on that particular century. The remaining courses are electives; however, students will always design their coursework in consultation with mentors and the Director of Graduate Studies so as to balance broad coverage of prose, poetry, performance, visual and other cultural products with historical and theoretical background as well as specific methodological training.

One audited course per year may be counted toward the total of sixteen required credits, although students may also audit additional courses beyond the sixteen. Courses may be audited only with the permission of the instructor. The minimum general requirement for auditing is attendance in two-thirds of the class sessions; instructors may set additional requirements for auditing their classes. Students may also petition once per semester to submit one final paper to fulfill the requirements of two courses. In this case, both instructors must agree to accept a joint submission and must also specify the minimum requirements for an acceptable paper (usually demonstrating more substantial research). A jointly submitted paper will be evaluated and graded separately for each course.

Students are encouraged to explore opportunities for taking courses through the IvyPlus Exchange Scholar Program, which, when appropriate, can be used to fulfill some of Yale Slavic's distributional requirements or complement a student's individual research interests. More information on IvyPlus and other exchange scholar programs can be found on the [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website](#).

### *Teaching Fellowships*

Since the faculty consider teaching to be an integral part of graduate training, all graduate students are expected to teach for a total of four semesters (typically in the third and fourth years of study). Students are usually assigned two semesters of language teaching, during which time they are mentored and trained by a lead language lecturer, and two semesters of literature/culture teaching, for which they either run discussion sections for large-enrollment lecture courses, or serve as instructor-apprentices in small undergraduate seminars.

Teaching assignments are made according to the following guidelines:

- (1) Slavic students in years three and four are given first priority. If they meet the language proficiency requirements outlined by the Graduate School and the Slavic Department, each student is usually offered two semesters as a Teaching Fellow in language courses and two semesters as a Teaching Fellow in literature/culture courses.
- (2) For cross-listed courses with pre-arranged agreements with other departments (such as Comparative Literature and History), Teaching Fellow positions may be offered to students who are in their priority teaching years in these departments.
- (3) Any remaining Teaching Fellow positions may be offered to Slavic graduate students, with greater preference given to students in their earlier years.

All Teaching Fellow assignments are contingent on course enrollments, as well as final approval by course instructors and the Graduate School. When appropriate, Slavic students are encouraged to teach outside of the department and to make use of the many resources of the [Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning](#).

While faculty structure the Teaching Fellowship differently according to the unique demands of each course, the relationship between instructor and Teaching Fellow should be one of mentorship and apprenticeship, offering the Teaching Fellow ample opportunities to observe an experienced teacher at work, develop their own pedagogical style, experiment with varied teaching techniques, and gain critical experience in presenting information and giving feedback to students. To aid in this development, the lead instructor will visit at least one of the Teaching Fellow's sections (or observe one class session that the Teaching Fellow is in charge of), discuss the pedagogical strengths and weaknesses of the section, and submit a written evaluation, including suggestions for improvement, to both the student and the Director of Graduate Studies.

### *Summers*

As a rule, academics work on a twelve-month calendar. This means that students, like faculty, are expected to continue their training and research during the summer months. What exactly this should entail will depend on the particular needs of the student and the stage of the program they are currently completing. For example, in the summer after their first year, students might participate in advanced language study; after their second year, they might combine language study with preliminary research on a potential dissertation topic. After the third, fourth, and subsequent years, most students will be conducting dissertation research, drafting dissertation chapters, and participating in professionalization opportunities (workshops, teaching summer courses, etc.). In the summer before their final year, students should prepare a plan for applying to academic and/or non-academic jobs and draft all necessary application documents for their search. These documents should be shared and discussed with the chair of the student's dissertation committee.

In many cases, summer program and funding deadlines occur early in the academic year, sometimes as early as September or October for the following summer/year. Because of this, students should discuss their summer plans early in each academic year with the Director of Graduate Studies or the chair of their dissertation committee. Summer travel and research grants, as well as opportunities for teaching, studying, and workshop participation, change frequently. Many are offered by the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies and other Yale resources, programs in international teaching and research outside of Yale (e.g. [ACIE research and study programs](#) and the STARTALK programs offered by a wide range of institutions, for example, the institute at [Middlebury College](#)), the field's main professional organizations ([ASEEES](#) and [AATSEEL](#)), and other universities. It is every student's responsibility to research options, keep track of relevant deadlines, and seek guidance when necessary, including from the Slavic Graduate Student Advisory Committee.

### *Intellectual Life in the Department*

Several annual programs enhance the intellectual life of the Slavic Department, including the Slavic Colloquium, which features talks by leading scholars within and adjacent to the discipline, and the Slavic Film Colloquium, which screens films and other media from Russia, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union and invites speakers on topics in film and media studies. Both the Slavic Colloquium and the Slavic Film Colloquium are organized by graduate students (typically second- and third-year students), under the supervision of designated faculty members. In addition, the department supports the Slavic Graduate Student Advisory Committee in

organizing varied events, including regular Russian-language and/or research workshops (*kruzhki*) and dissertation progress roundtables.

Beyond these regular colloquia, the Slavic Department frequently hosts interdisciplinary and international conferences and workshops. Graduate students are also active in organizing and participating in conferences and working groups that bridge departmental communities at Yale (many sponsored by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the Whitney Center for the Humanities). The nature of these events consistently changes according to the makeup of the faculty and student body. Because of this, graduate students are encouraged to bring ideas for enriching the intellectual and social life of the department to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chair, who will, when possible, provide guidance and help facilitate the funding and organization of such events. The university and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences also provide resources for funding and encouraging intellectual life in the humanities that vary by year. Students should remain alert to these announcements as they are made.

#### *Professional Development and the Job Market(s)*

The Director of Graduate Studies normally hosts two professionalization workshops per year: one in the fall semester on a topic relating to publishing, conferences, teaching, or another topic of interest; and one in the spring semester on the academic and/or non-academic job market. While all students are welcome to attend these workshops at any point in their graduate career, students are especially encouraged to attend the job workshops in the spring before they intend to go on the job market. Students are also encouraged to attend the professionalization events organized by the [Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning](#), the [Center for Language Study](#), the [Office of Career Strategy](#), and other departments and programs at Yale. Some of these resources are outlined on the [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website](#).

It is good practice for students to begin building their professional networks and disciplinary competence early in their graduate career. This might involve joining the two main professional organizations for Slavic--[ASEEES](#) and [AATSEEL](#)--and reading their journals (*Slavic Review* and *Slavic and East European Journal*), as well as other relevant journals (*Russian Review*, *Russian Literature*, *Kritika*, *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, to name only some of the most prominent). Conference, job, publication, and other professional announcements are also circulated on the [SEEEES listserv](#) and the [SEELANGS listserv](#). Familiarity with other disciplines or more specialized fields of study might entail joining their professional organizations, reading their journals, and attending their conferences. Moreover, social media is increasingly becoming invaluable for distributing current information on lectures and conferences, calls for papers, publications, and other academic news, especially across national borders. Students should consider whether following certain users or groups on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram might complement their professionalization.

Academic job announcements are posted year-round by the [SEEEES listserv](#), the [SEELANGS listserv](#), the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the [MLA Job List](#), [ASEEES](#), and [AATSEEL](#). Students on the job market should remain attentive to these resources, discussing possible job applications with the chair of their dissertation committee and/or the Director of Graduate Studies.



The Yale Slavic Department is equally supportive of students who hope to follow a traditional academic path, students who embark on non-academic or hybrid careers, and students who change their minds throughout their course of study. Support for academic careers typically involves the faculty advisers' intensive review of application materials (cover letters, CVs, research and teaching statements), mock interviews with faculty, mock job talks with the whole department, and assistance in negotiating offers. Departmental support for non-academic careers is more variable, but might involve writing letters of recommendation or assistance identifying potential mentors. In any case, it is the responsibility of each student to make their intentions clear to the Director of Graduate Studies and their advisers, just as it is the responsibility of each faculty member to regularly check in with their advisees about their current professional plans. Such an open line of communication contributes to an effective advising relationship and an atmosphere of mutual respect and transparency within the department.

It is also important to note that in the Yale Slavic Department professional advising does not end with the student's graduation. Former advisers and advisees are encouraged to remain in contact after graduation, so that the department can support alumni who are moving through postdoctoral fellowships or visiting positions, navigating a switch from one kind of employment to another, or in search of a permanent or more favorable position.

#### *Conference Participation*

To integrate themselves into the varied professional networks of Slavic and other disciplines, students are encouraged to present their work at regional, international, and thematic conferences. However, students should select opportunities judiciously and thoughtfully with the intention of building critical intellectual communities, receiving essential feedback on ongoing projects, and refining presentation skills. Ideally, conference presentations will advance the student's progress toward the degree rather than delay it. Skipping a conference is also preferable to presenting underprepared. More is not always better. Students should regularly consult with their advisers and mentors in scheduling their conference and workshop participation. More information on conference travel funding can be found on the [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website](#).

#### *Writing Resources*

The Slavic faculty see all course seminar assignments--whether short writing assignments, long research papers, or conference-style talks--to be opportunities for students to refine their academic writing style and presentation skills. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the resources available at the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, and especially the [Graduate Writing Laboratory](#), which offers individual consultations, study halls, peer-review groups, and more.

#### *Summary of Third-Year Requirements*

After their first two years of coursework, all graduate students are required to complete a number of requirements before they are eligible to be advanced to candidacy. These requirements must all be fulfilled in the third year of graduate study and are summarized as follows:

By September 1	Minor Field Portfolio
	Qualifying Paper

Early October	Comprehensive Examination
Early December	Qualifying Examination
Early February	Pre-Prospectus Colloquium
Early April	Prospectus Presentation

### *Minor Field Portfolio*

As part of their program of study, students are responsible for developing a minor field of specialization in one of the following: (1) a second language or literature; (2) visual culture or one of the other arts; (3) a topic in intellectual history or a specific interdisciplinary approach; or (4) another discipline relevant to their primary interests. The minor field requirement is intended to offer students the opportunity to develop a meaningful expertise beyond their primary specializations in Russian literature and culture and often entails acquiring a familiarity with the driving questions and methodologies of another discipline. A thoughtfully and seriously developed minor field can prove especially fruitful in diversifying a student's research profile and teaching competencies, both of which have proven beneficial on the academic job market. For example, a specialist in 19th-century Russian literature might pursue a minor field in Soviet theater, a specialist in Russian modernist poetry might develop a minor field in Czech modernist literature, or a specialist in contemporary Russian film might put together a minor field in anthropology and its methods. The minor field can be developed most readily through graduate coursework in other departments; students may also choose to expand their minor field work through the GSAS [certificate programs](#). While students are encouraged to involve an outside faculty adviser in the design and fulfillment of their minor field, they should also discuss their potential minor field with the Director of Graduate Studies as early as possible in their course of study.

To demonstrate competency in their chosen minor field, students are required to submit a minor field portfolio to the Director of Graduate Studies no later than September 1st of their third year of graduate study. At a minimum, this portfolio should include an explanatory cover letter and term papers for at least two graduate-level courses. Other supporting documents in the portfolio might include: course syllabuses and reading lists, alternative assignments, conference talks, workshop participation, etc. Students should discuss the contents of their portfolio with the Director of Graduate Studies well in advance of the submission deadline. Two members of the Slavic faculty will evaluate the minor field portfolio, either approving it or returning it to the student with recommendations for resubmission.

### *Qualifying Paper*

Students must submit a qualifying paper no later than September 1st of their third year. The paper, which in many cases will be a revised version of a seminar paper, should be developed in consultation with a faculty adviser. The paper should highlight original research and an ambitious conceptualization, possess a logical structure, and be clearly written. It should be between 7000 and 9000 words, including references and notes. The qualifying paper is expected to be of publishable quality, and students are encouraged to consider submitting it to a journal for publication. The qualifying paper will be evaluated by two members of the Slavic faculty, who will either approve it or return it to the student with recommendations for resubmission.

### *The Comprehensive Examination and the Departmental Reading List*



In early October of their third year, students will take a comprehensive examination on Russian literature and culture from the nineteenth century to the present. The comprehensive is a 12-hour take-home exam. This exam is meant to test the students' knowledge of the broad scope of Russian literature and culture, as well as their ability to analyze various kinds of cultural products and position specific works within their historical, cultural, and critical contexts.

Students should use the departmental reading list as a guide in preparing for this exam, but they are also welcome to draw from beyond the list in their answers. The reading list, which is periodically revised, serves as the foundation for well-rounded erudition in Russian literature. Students are expected to build on it based on their academic interests and research needs. Students should not expect departmental seminars to completely overlap with the material on the reading list, and indeed should begin independent reading in preparation for the exams as early as their first year of study. We do not include other media or literary traditions in the reading list, and instead encourage students with serious interests (in film or in Polish literature, for example) to develop rigorous independent lists in consultation with specializing faculty. We provide opportunities to do so through minor field requirements and specialized qualifying exam reading lists.

On the morning of the exam, students will receive by email approximately six questions. They will be expected to answer two of these questions in essay form. The completed essays must be emailed to the Director of Graduate Studies no later than twelve hours after the exam was distributed. Each essay should be no more than 2500 words (not including references or notes). Students are welcome to consult any print or online materials, but they must not discuss their answers with any other student, faculty member, or scholar. When quoting sources, students should offer reasonable citations; however, these citations do not need to be exhaustive or pristinely formatted. The comprehensive exam will be evaluated by two members of the Slavic faculty, who will assign a grade (honors, high pass, pass, or fail). Students who receive a grade of pass or fail will be asked to retake the exam, according to a schedule determined by the Director of Graduate Studies.

### *The Qualifying Examination*

In early December of their third year, students will take a qualifying examination based on two specialized reading lists. This exam is a one-hour oral exam with twenty-five minutes allotted to each list and presided over by two faculty advisers and the Director of Graduate Studies. The exam is meant to test the student's knowledge of two specific areas of study, which often serve as important preparation for the development of a dissertation topic. For example, a student planning to write a dissertation on the nineteenth-century Russian realist novel might create a specialized list on the French and English realist novels or realism in music; or a student planning to write on post-Soviet drama might create a list on theories of performance in Russia and elsewhere. Students should discuss these topics with the Director of Graduate Studies and ask potential faculty members to serve as advisers/examiners as early as possible and ideally by the end of their second year. During the six to nine months prior to the qualifying exam, students will work with their faculty advisers to draft reading lists suitable to their chosen topics with a range of primary and secondary sources. The size and content of these lists will vary by topic, but students might think of each one as roughly equivalent to a semester-long graduate seminar. Students must notify and receive approval from the Director of Graduate Studies of their two

topics and faculty advisers no later than September 1st. Two weeks prior to the exam, students must submit their final reading lists to the Director of Graduate Studies. The comprehensive exam will be evaluated by the faculty advisers/examiners and Director of Graduate Studies, who will assign a grade (honors, high pass, pass, or fail). Students who receive a grade of pass or fail will be asked to retake the exam, according to a schedule determined by the Director of Graduate Studies.

### *The Pre-Prospectus Colloquium*

As early as possible in the fall semester of their third year, students will ask one faculty member to serve as adviser for the development of their dissertation pre-prospectus (co-advisers can be requested if appropriate). [Considerations for choosing an adviser are discussed in the section, “General Guidelines on Advising the Prospectus and Dissertation.”] In early February, after the successful completion of the comprehensive and qualifying examinations, students will present a preliminary version of their dissertation prospectus to a colloquium attended by all Slavic ladder faculty.

Two weeks before the colloquium, students must email their pre-prospectus (approximately 3000 words plus a detailed bibliography) to the Slavic Director of Graduate Studies, who will send it to all Slavic ladder faculty. This pre-prospectus should include a brief summary of the dissertation topic, the expected scholarly contribution, methodology, and theoretical framework of the project, a review of relevant scholarship, a discussion of the main materials or sources for the dissertation (including the need for any archival research), an outline of the anticipated chapter breakdown, and a tentative timeline for completion. At the colloquium, students will present a fifteen-minute introduction to their prospective dissertation. This will be followed by forty minutes of discussion and feedback. In the week after the colloquium, students will meet individually with their faculty advisers and the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss necessary revisions to their prospectus. In cases where there are serious concerns about the proposed dissertation, students may be asked by their faculty advisers and/or the Director of Graduate Studies to reconsider or change their topic before moving on to the prospectus presentation.

### *The Prospectus Presentation*

After the pre-prospectus colloquium, students will ask two faculty members to serve on their dissertation committee. These committee members will oversee the revision of the preliminary prospectus into a final draft (approximately 5000 words plus a detailed bibliography). In early April, students will present the final version of their dissertation prospectus to all students and faculty in the department. Two weeks before the defense, the prospectus will be precirculated to the Director of Graduate Studies and Slavic ladder faculty who will review it and notify the student of its approval within one week of submission. If the prospectus is approved, the prospectus will be sent to all members of the Slavic Department and the presentation will take place as planned. If the prospectus is not approved, the Director of Graduate Studies will consult with the student and their advisers to plan for its revision and to set a later date for the prospectus presentation

The prospectus presentation will take one hour, beginning with a ten-minute introduction by the student and followed by forty-five minutes of questions and suggestions from everyone in attendance. The point of including all faculty and students is to provide the student with as much

feedback as possible, to give rising students a sense of what awaits them, and to foster collegiality in the department by making everyone aware of what others are working on.

#### *Admission to Candidacy and the M.Phil. Degree*

To be admitted to candidacy, students must fulfill all of the graduate school and department pre-dissertation requirements described above and must be in good academic standing with the department.

Students may petition the Graduate School to receive an en route M.Phil. degree. This can be done in the semester the student expects to complete all pre-dissertation requirements.

#### *The Dissertation Committee*

The dissertation committee should include at least three faculty members: a chair (who must be a ladder faculty member from Slavic), one additional faculty member from Slavic, and one faculty member either from Slavic, another department, or outside Yale. Students can petition to add additional committee members. Once the student's dissertation prospectus has been presented to and approved by the Slavic Department and the student has been admitted to candidacy, the student will be asked to confirm at least two members of their dissertation committee (one being the chair). The entire three-person committee must be formally filed with the Slavic Director of Graduate Studies no later than October 1st of the student's fourth year. From this point on, the chair of the dissertation committee will serve as the student's primary adviser in intellectual and professional matters, and will work in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies on relevant advising issues as well as the logistics of program completion (dissertation progress and submission, applying for jobs, etc.). If a student wishes to change their committee membership after the end of the fourth year, they must petition the Slavic Department through the Director of Graduate Studies and/or Department Chair.

#### *General Guidelines for Advising the Prospectus and Dissertation*

Students should be mindful of differences in expertise and style when asking faculty members to serve as pre-prospectus or prospectus advisers or as members of the dissertation committee. In choosing such mentors, students may approach a faculty member who has the deepest familiarity with their topic or the most relevant theoretical expertise, or with whom they have worked particularly well in a course, or who has inspired them to do their most creative and sophisticated work, and so on. In addition, when working with advisers and the dissertation committee, students should consider the distinct roles of each committee member. The chair of the dissertation committee should always be the first point of contact in providing feedback on drafts, writing letters of recommendation, discussing professional plans, vetting application materials, and tackling any general problems that need attention. Students should seek at least one individual meeting with the chair of their committee per semester and more if needed. The other members of the committee may play a more supporting role in offering feedback and advice. Students should be mindful of this division of labor when constituting and engaging with their committee. Early in the dissertation process students should also clarify each committee member's expectations (regarding a "reasonable" amount of time for the return of drafts, lead time for recommendations, etc.) and preferences (for example, some committee members other than the chair will want to read multiple drafts, others only the final result).

### *The Dissertation*

The dissertation is the culmination of the student's work in the doctoral program and an important emblem of professional competence, intellectual rigor, and academic potential. As such, it should demonstrate mastery of a defined field of research and should articulate an original and substantive contribution to knowledge. While all dissertations should have clearly defined empirical and theoretical stakes and be grounded in appropriate methodological choices, each project will approach its central questions in necessarily distinct ways: some based more heavily in archival research, others shaped more profoundly by theoretical discussions, and still others determined by entirely different disciplinary or interdisciplinary demands. While working on their dissertation, students should remain attuned to questions of writerly craft and should strive for clarity and liveliness of their academic prose. Including footnotes and bibliography, the dissertation should be no fewer than 200 pages in length. Students are encouraged to explore [previous dissertations from Yale's Slavic Department](#) to get a sense of the accepted standards and conventions, as well as the variability in topic, structure, and methodology. All Yale dissertations can be found in Sterling Memorial Library, either in digital format or in Manuscripts and Archives.

### *The First Chapter Talk*

During the spring semester of the fourth year, students will deliver a forty-five-minute talk on their first chapter to the entire Slavic Department. One week before the talk, the Director of Graduate Studies will confirm with the chair of the student's dissertation committee that the chapter draft has been preliminarily approved (pending subsequent revisions). The talk will be followed by questions and discussion. This event is intended to serve not only as an early dissertation benchmark, but also as an opportunity for students to gain essential experience writing and delivering a long lecture. Because of this, students should prepare for this talk as they would a job talk or an invited lecture, focusing on the clarity and professionalism of both its content and delivery. The Director of Graduate Studies will work with students to schedule these talks, but ideally they should take place before spring break.

Students will revise their chapter after the talk, submitting a final draft to their dissertation committee no later than May 1st. The dissertation chair will discuss the chapter with the other committee members and notify the Director of Graduate Studies of their evaluation (approved, not approved) by May 15th. If the chapter is not approved, the student will be asked to revise in accordance with specific recommendations and will be asked to submit a revised version of the chapter by a date determined by the Director of Graduate Studies.

### *Submission of Dissertation*

The main deadlines and requirements for dissertation submission are outlined on the [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website](#). The Slavic Department, however, has a number of internal deadlines, which students must also keep in mind. The student must inform the Director of Graduate Studies in writing of their intention to submit no later than September 1st for a fall semester GSAS submission (October 1st) and no later than February 15th for a spring semester GSAS submission (March 15th). Once notified, the Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the chair of the dissertation committee, will identify readers for the dissertation (who will file formal reports with the GSAS): typically, the dissertation committee chair, one reader from outside the committee, and one additional reader (either from the committee or outside the

committee). Two weeks prior to the GSAS deadlines, the Director of Graduate Studies will ask the chair of the dissertation committee to confirm that the student will have finished all necessary work for submission. Approximately one month after the GSAS submission deadline, students will receive their reader reports and notification that their dissertation has been accepted, accepted with required revisions, or rejected (sometimes this process takes longer depending on reader and GSAS schedules). In the event that the dissertation has been failed, the Director of Graduate Studies will work with the student and their committee to determine a deadline for reevaluation.

#### *Slavic Graduate Student Advisory Committee (SGSAC)*

Every year graduate students will be asked to elect three members from their ranks to serve on the Slavic Graduate Student Advisory Committee (SGSAC). This committee is intended to facilitate consistent, open, and mutual communication between the graduate students and the faculty. The committee will nominate one of its members to attend certain parts of the department's regular faculty meetings, at the invitation of the Chair. The committee member may be asked to convey any pressing graduate student concerns to the faculty, and will be expected to report on the faculty meeting to their student colleagues. Depending on the year, and in consultation with the Chair of the department, the committee may also oversee several departmental administrative responsibilities, including the maintenance of current funding/fellowship information, the peer mentorship program, a Russian-language and/or work-in-progress *kruzhok*, and dissertation progress roundtables. Other responsibilities may be added to the portfolio in consultation with the committee members and the Chair of the department.

#### *General Expectations and Academic/Disciplinary Warnings*

Graduate students in Yale Slavic are expected to adhere to high departmental expectations for professional and collegial behavior throughout their years in the program. Students are ultimately responsible for their own timely completion of departmental requirements and fulfillment of expectations, including language proficiency, comprehensive exams, teaching responsibilities, generous participation in departmental events, and adequate progress on the dissertation.

In the rare cases that such actions prove necessary, students will be given written warning from the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chair, along with the opportunity to correct the deficiency and avoid being asked to leave the program on academic grounds. Academic warnings can be given for any of the following reasons: failure of a course or an examination, late submission or insufficient fulfillment of a requirement (e.g. examination reading list, dissertation pre-prospectus or prospectus, first chapter draft). Violations of personal conduct, academic integrity, or professional ethics will be referred directly to the [Dean's Office](#). In all matters of academic and disciplinary actions, including if a student is asked to leave the program, full confidentiality will be respected.

#### *Student Grievances*

Students may bring complaints regarding harassment and discrimination against any member of the department or university to the Chair or the Director of Graduate Studies. Alternatively, students may contact the Discrimination and Harassment Resource Coordinators or Title IX Coordinators for the Graduate School. More information on grievance procedures can be found on the [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website](#).

*Graduate School Policies*

For more information on degree requirements, credit and degree petitions, withdrawals and leaves of absence, parental support, financial aid, and other matters, see the [website of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences](#).