Greetings!

Congratulations on being accepted to Carleton! Since you have expressed an interest in studying Russian, I am happy to provide you with information about our program. At Carleton you will find small classes, close contact with professors, and a tight-knit community of Russophiles who share a deep curiosity about the country Winston Churchill called “a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma.”

Most students who major in Russian at Carleton have no previous experience with the language, but students who come in at more advanced levels find no shortage of opportunities to continue their study. In addition to language classes, we offer courses in both Russian and English on a variety of topics, from the greats of nineteenth-century literature, to the cult of Stalin, to the role of food in Russian culture.

Roughly half of our beginning language students end up going on our off-campus program, “Language and Culture in Global Russia.” Based at Moscow State University, the program includes a trip to St. Petersburg and an extended stay in the environs of Lake Baikal, where students use their Russian language and cultural skills to investigate Russia’s Mongol heritage. Thanks to the generosity of Carleton donors, many of our students receive summer fellowships to continue their adventures in Russia, from shooting a film on the trans-Siberian railroad to studying Russian icon painting.

Back on campus, students find ample opportunity to practice their Russian and bond with fellow students. Our “Language Associate,” usually a graduate student from Moscow, hosts weekly Russian tea, biweekly Russian lunch table, holiday celebrations, picnics, and other activities. With the Twin Cities only an hour away, trips to films, plays, or the Museum of Russian Art are also on the program.

Once narrowly focused on the study of literature, our department has evolved over the years to become highly interdisciplinary. In recent years, students have combined the study of Russian with other interests, including Women’s and Gender Studies, International Relations, History, Art History, and Music Performance, to name a few. But don’t worry – there’s still plenty of opportunity to read Tolstoy and Dostoevsky!

You can find more information on the Russian department website or on our facebook page, “Russian at Carleton College.” If you have questions, please don’t hesitate to email me at lgoering@carleton.edu.

With best wishes,

Laura Goering
Chair, Department of German and Russian