Instructor: George Fowler  
Office: Ballantine 502  
Hours: TBA (probably TR 3:00–4:00 or something similar)  
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Course Prerequisites

Graduate standing in the Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literatures, at least three years of Russian. For undergraduates, Russian major, 4th year corequisite. Others may enroll with permission of instructor.

Course Format

Seminar-style lecture and discussion. Students are encouraged/required to take an active part in the discussion. Additional sessions as required for any sub-groups of the course.

Course Objectives:

1. Students should get a firm grounding in the structuralist and post-structuralist (“generic generative”) linguistic analysis of the major issues in Russian phonology, morphophonemics (= morphoanalysis), and morphology.
2. Students with a stronger linguistic background should gain some appreciation for the possible alternative formal/theoretical approaches to the Russian linguistic issues considered.
3. Students without a linguistic background should start to develop a sense of the flavor of the linguistic description of Russian.
4. Students should get some idea how an economical description of Russian facts may be of some use in practical learning or teaching of the language.

Textbooks

Hamilton, William S. Introduction to Russian Phonology and Word Structure.  
Townsend, Charles. Russian Word Formation.

Requirements

1. All students will have four written assignments, which will all be given out a few weeks into the course. There are no in-class or take-home exams. These assignments will vary considerably, but they all basically ask you to evaluate one or more approaches to linguistic problems of various types. You are encouraged to collaborate with other students in the course in thinking these things through, but I want each student to write up his or her own results independently. The assignments are not lengthy, they might average about 2–3 pages of written work to turn in. It doesn’t matter if you type them or write by hand (in at least one case, hand may be easier), but try to make the submitted work clean-looking. We will negotiate the exact due dates together at the time I pass them out. I don’t like to grade these assignments until I have all work on a particular topic in hand, so we need to adhere to the deadlines we set ourselves.
2. Each student will write one critical review of a published research article on some topic bearing on the material covered in this course. This will be roughly 5 pages in length. Get my approval of the article you select, and I may be able to suggest appropriate articles to review. You should select the topic by week 11, and the review is due by the end of finals week (earlier is of course fine!).

Course Plan

We will first work through Hamilton from start to finish. You should try to stay at least one chapter ahead in your reading. So read the first several chapters for Wednesday (you’ll find them easy going). Basically, I use Hamilton as a jumping-off point for discussion of the issues that are settled in one way (but not the only way) in that book. Time permitting, we may read several articles on allied topics toward the end of this period (Bruce Hayes on consonant voicing assimilation, Milan Bily on vowel-zero alternations, and Janis Melvold on stress). These will be provided in .pdf format.

Once we finish phonology, we’ll do some morphology, using Townsend as the jumping off point. We won’t cover the entire book, but we’ll do as much as we have time for.