RUSS 3540-001: RUSSIAN CULTURE TO 1800
With Dr. Garn
T/H 2:00 pm – 3:20 pm OSH 134

This course will introduce you to early Russian history, its key events and figures, from Christianization in the 10th century to the birth of secular literature in the 18th. But more importantly, it will offer you an opportunity to read authentic texts from this period and to strive to understand the famous “Russian soul.” Reading most diverse texts, from the first Russian Primary Chronicle to the first samples of secular literature, we will discover which events and factors shaped Russian mentality, and how the legendary reformers, Peter the Great and Catherine the Great attempted to secularize and Europeanize this vast land. Eighteenth-century Russian prose will be represented by three gems: Chulkov’s short picaresque novel, “The Comely Cook” (1770); Russia’s first bestseller, “Vanka Kain,” by Komarov (1779); and Karamzin’s sentimental tale “Poor Liza” (1792). These seminal texts constitute the beginning of Russian prose fiction and are the precursors of the Golden Age of Russian letters in the nineteenth century. Reading, writing and critical thinking will be the skills we will focus on in this course. Readings and discussion in English. Prerequisites: LANG 2010 or Advanced Standing