The Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center offers an interdisciplinary major and minor in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (REEES). These programs involve students in the study of an important and complex world area in a manner that draws together the approaches of different disciplines, while at the same time building knowledge in a single discipline. A student will construct an individual program of study, depending on the student’s interests and career goals, in consultation with the undergraduate advisor of the Center.

The major in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies consists of three components: 1) language study (Russian, Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, Turkish, and more); 2) a multidisciplinary area studies focus; and 3) concentration in a single discipline. Language study can be in Russian or in any of the other languages of the region offered at the University. Students also take courses in a variety of disciplines (history, sociology, political science) and develop a broad expertise in the history, politics, and culture of the region that includes Russia, but also many other countries, from the Czech Republic to Estonia to Uzbekistan. In addition, the concentration in a single discipline provides students with deep knowledge of a specific field that can qualify them for graduate or professional study. Many students also use this concentration to double major. With this program, the REEES major provides students with an interdisciplinary focus on issues critical to the region and foundational language training necessary for professional specialization in the area.

Students often go on to careers in government service (foreign service, FBI, CIA) or to work at NGOs (environment, human rights, and other international careers) in addition to publishing, editing, writing, translation, international business, law, teaching, and research.

REEES is one of two “Russian” majors (and minors) at the University of Illinois. What is the difference between them and which is the right one for you?

The REEES major has a current affairs focus and multidisciplinary area studies that develops students’ skill sets in the humanities, social sciences, and other fields. The major in Slavic Studies emphasizes the study of language and literature, and students develop intensive cultural literacy and communication skills through humanities-oriented training. Many Slavic Studies majors go on to careers in writing and editing, media, or work with international cultural foundations and organizations. Both majors are excellent preparation for law school or graduate school and careers in teaching or research.
Component 3: Courses in a single discipline. Among those disciplines that are most commonly used with this specialization are anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, Russian language and literature, and sociology. Among disciplines also used are business administration, comparative literature, education, English, fine arts, French, German, journalism, linguistics, mathematics, music, philosophy, psychology, and various natural sciences. Others are permitted. Consult your advisor.  

1. The Center maintains a list of applicable courses on its web site.
2. If the study of a language is used for this component, 20 hours must be taken beyond the requirement of 6 additional hours outlined under component 1 above.