

NICOLE SVOBODNY, PhD

svobodny@wustl.edu

EMPLOYMENT

Washington University, St Louis, MO

Teaching Professor, Global Studies, 2024-present

Senior Lecturer, Global Studies, 2014-2024

Assistant Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, 2006-2022

Lecturer, Global Studies (formerly International & Area Studies), 2006-2014

Harcourt Education, Austin, TX

Editor, 2004-2006; Technology Editor, 2001-2004; Permissions Editor, 2000-2001

Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA, Visiting Lecturer, Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures, 1997-1999

Columbia University, New York, NY, Instructor, Core Curriculum and Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures, 1990-1997

EDUCATION

PhD, Russian Literature, Columbia University, New York, NY, 1999

Dissertation: *"But Who's His Father?": Pushkin's "Little Tragedies" and the Self-Creation of a National Poet* (Adviser: Boris Gasparov)

Certificate, Harriman Institute, School of International & Public Affairs, Columbia University, New York, NY, 1995

MA, Russian Literature, Columbia University, New York, NY, 1990

MA Thesis: *Covered Mirror: The Split-Self in Tatyana Tolstaya's Short Stories* (Adviser: Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy)

BA, Comparative Literature, Brown University, Providence, RI, 1986

Honors Thesis: *The Imperfect Circle: A Comparative Study of William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Kateb Yacine's Nejma* (Adviser: Edward James Ahearn)

Year Abroad in Paris, France, 1984-1985; Semester in Leningrad, USSR, Fall 1986

PUBLICATIONS

Monograph

Nijinsky's Feeling Mind: The Dancer Writes, the Writer Dances, Lexington Books, July 2023. Paperback forthcoming: Bloomsbury Academic, April 2026.

Selected Reviews:

- Rishona Zimring, "Dance Treasures: Two Books on Modern Dance...", Review Essay, *Modernism/modernity*, Volume 31, Number 4 (November 2024): 773-777.
- Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 83, Issue 3 (Fall 2024): 676-677.
- Natalie Rouland, *The Russian Review*, August 2024.
- S. E. Freidler, *Choice Reviews*, April 2024.

Edited Books

Migration and Mobility in the Modern Age: Refugees, Travelers, and Traffickers in Europe and Eurasia, ed. Anika Walke, Jan Musekamp, and Nicole Svobodny. Indiana University Press, December, 2017.

Selected Reviews:

- Christian Koller, *Laboratorium: Russian Review of Social Research*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2019): 211-212.
- Iona Luca, *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (2019): 28-33.
- Scott C.M. Bailey, *Journal of World History*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2018): 39-42.
- Alena K. Alamgir, *Russian Review*, 77, 1 (2018): 170-171.

Under the Sky of My Africa: Pushkin and Blackness, ed. Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, Nicole Svobodny, and Ludmilla Trigos, with foreword by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Northwestern University Press, 2006.

Selected Reviews:

- Called one of the “pioneering studies of race in nineteenth-century Russian literature” in *Slavic Review* (Summer 2021).
- Henry Louis Gates Jr., “Was the Father of Russian Lit a Brother?” *The Root*, April 13, 2013.
- Monica Greenleaf, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (Winter, 2007): 776-778.
- Vladimir Shubin, *HS-Africa* (2007).
- Raquel Greene, *Pushkin Review*, Vol. 8/9 (2006): 149-151.

Articles and Book Chapters

“Walking with a Tolstoyan Dancer: Physical and Psychic Mobility in Vaslav Nijinsky’s Diary,” pp. 80-107, in *Migration and Mobility in the Modern Age: Refugees, Travelers, and Traffickers in Europe and Eurasia*, ed. Anika Walke, Jan Musekamp, and Nicole Svobodny, Indiana University Press, 2017.

“Nijinsky’s ‘Feeling,’ Or How a Dancer Began Copying Out Pushkin Poems But Didn’t Finish,” *Urbandus Review*, Special Issue in Honor of Catharine T. Nepomnyashchy, 2016: 65-75.

Танцовщик как писатель: Вацлав Нижинский и телесность языка” [“The Dancer Writes: Vaslav Nijinsky and Embodied Language”], *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, No. 135 (5/2015): 56-67.

Reviews and Translations

Review of David Bethea, ed. *Pushkin Today in Romantic Russia, II*, Summer 1998.

Translation (with Ksana Blank) of Ksana Blank, “Lev Tolstoy’s Suprematist Icon-Painting,” *Elementa: Journal of Slavic Studies and Comparative Cultural Semiotics*, ed. Vyacheslav Ivanov, Volume 2, No.1, 1995: 67-81.

Translation (with Maude Meisel) of Olga Voronina, “Soviet Patriarchy: Past and Present,” *Hypatia*, Vol.8, No.4 (Autumn, 1993): 97-112.

Translation (with Maude Meisel) of Larissa Lissytukina, "Soviet Women at the Crossroads of Perestroika," in Nanette Funk and Magda Meuller, eds. *Gender Politics and Post-Communism: Reflections from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Routledge Press, 1993.

In Progress

"Nabokov's Dancers and Darwin's Daughter" article in progress.

"Neanderthal in Motion: Kupka's Illustration of the Chapelle-aux-Saints Fossil Specimen in the Modernist Imagination," article in progress.

"From Russia (via India) with Love: The *Remarkable* Gurus of the New Age," article in progress.

GRANTS & AWARDS

Recent Research & Teaching

Professional Development Fund, Office of the Provost, Washington University, 2025

Arts and Sciences Dean's Outstanding Teaching Award, Washington University, 2024

U.S. Department of State Title-VIII Grant, Summer 2023

Summer Research Lab Grant, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2023

Teaching Triangles Stipend, Center for Teaching and Learning, WashU, Spring 2023

National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, 2019

Professional Development Funds for research at New York Public Library, International & Area Studies-WashU, 2013, 2015, 2017

Professional Development Funds for Independent research in Czechia and France for development of courses on Migration and Identity, IAS-WashU, Summers 2011- 2012

CIEE International Faculty Seminar, St. Petersburg, Russia, IAS-WashU, Summer, 2010

As Product Manager /Curriculum Designer for Educational Publishing

Finalist, Distinguished Achievement Award, Association of American Publishers, 2003

All-Star American Software Award, Children's Software Revue, 2003

As Graduate Student

Rose Raskin Summer Grant for Dissertation Writing, Columbia University, 1996

Rose Raskin Fund Fellowship, Columbia University, 1996

Helen Mogilat Summer Grant for Travel to Russia, Columbia University, 1995

Harriman Junior Fellowship, Columbia University, 1993-1996

President's Fellowship, Columbia University, 1991-1992

COLLEGE COURSES TAUGHT

Washington University

Intercultural Transpositions: Russian Literature on World Stage and Screen (new, FL26)

The Communist Experiment in the Soviet Novel (forthcoming, SP26)

Interrogating *Crime and Punishment* (cross-listed with Legal Studies)

Russia and the West: Creating and Representing Identity (cross-listed as graduate course)

Reading *War and Peace* (cross-listed as graduate course)
Topics in Russian Literature and Culture: Childhood
Topics in Russian Literature and Culture: Dostoevsky's Novels
Topics in Russian Literature and Culture: The Short Story
Topics in Russian Literature and Culture: Madmen or Visionaries?

Washington University (Previous)

Global Studies Research Methods Proseminar and Assistantship
The Nineteenth-Century Russian Novel
Independent Study (Jazz in the USSR, Fall, 2021); (Russian Literary Theory, FL 2017)
Introduction to Russian Civilization (2006-2010)
Archeology & History of Central Asia, Summer Program in Kazakhstan Prep (SP 2011)
Russian Theater, Drama, and Performance: from Swan Lake to Punk Prayer
Russians Abroad: Literature, Migration and Identity
Russian Literature and Empire
Russian Literature at the Borders: Multiculturalism and Ethnic Conflict
Intermediate Russian Language I (2006-2013)
Intermediate Russian Language II (2007-2014)

Pennsylvania State University

Theater Arts of Russia (Spring 1997-99)
Translation from Russian to English (Fall, 1997-99)
Readings in Russian (third-year language course, 1997-99)
Intermediate Russian Language I (1997-1999)
Intermediate Russian Language II (1997-99)
Elementary Russian Language I (1997-1999)
Elementary Russian Language II (1997-99)

Columbia University

Logic & Rhetoric (first-year English composition, part of Core Curriculum) (1995-1997)
Literature Humanities (full-year course, part of Core Curriculum) (1994-1997)
Intermediate Russian Language I (1992-1994)
Intermediate Russian Language II (1992-1994)
Beginning Russian Language I (1990, 1991)
Beginning Russian Language II (1990-1992)

SERVICE

The Profession

- Peer Reviewer for Open Book Publishers (2025); *Didaskalia. Gazeta Teatralna* (2023); *Canadian Slavonic Papers* (2023); Lexington Books (2020)
- Founder, Organizer, and Convener, The Eurasian Studies Seminar, public lecture series held at Washington University in St. Louis (2023-2025)
- Selection Panelist, National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship (2022)
- Faculty Sponsor for WashU Student Presenters at annual Central Slavic Conference (2012-present). For recent student presenters, see:

<https://globalstudies.wustl.edu/news/washu-students-present-russian-urasian-research-central-slavic-conference>

<https://globalstudies.wustl.edu/news/three-washu-students-give-papers-central-slavic-conference>

- Selection Committee, Charles Timberlake Graduate Student Paper Prize (2023)
- Co-Sponsor, on behalf of WashU Eurasian Studies, annual Central Slavic Conference, St. Louis, MO (2016, 2017)
- Founder, Organizer and Convener, The Eurasian Divan (2012-2016)
- Co-organizer, “On the Move: Migration and Mobility in East and Central Europe and Eurasia,” interdisciplinary workshop at Washington University (Spring, 2013)
- Presenter, Regional Association for American Association for Teachers of Russian, Saint Louis University (2008-2011)
- President, North American Pushkin Society (1999)

Global Studies/Eurasian Studies (Washington University)

- Adviser for Major, Global Studies (approx. 15 students/year) (2006-present)
- Selection Committee, Madeleine Albright Award, Global Studies (2022, 2026)
- Sub-committee on Global Studies Major Reconfiguration (Fall 2025)
- Developer and Curator of Eurasian Studies Concentration, Global Studies (2013-2026)
- Study Abroad Departmental Adviser, Global Studies (2023-2025)
- Co-Chair, Global Studies Speaker Series Committee (2022-2025)
- Committee/Interviewer, Global Studies Undergraduate Theses (2023)
- Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies, Global Studies (2022-2023)
- Faculty Sponsor for undergraduate research assistant, part of Directed Research in GS/IAS, (2022, 2015)
- Academic Adviser for Russian Minor/Special Major in Russian (2006-2017)
- Sponsor, Student-run Eurasian Studies Film Festival (Fall, 2014)
- Designer/Copywriter, website for Russian Minor (2007-2009)
- Study Abroad Program Adviser, Russian Studies (2007-2011)
- Guest Lecturer, Introduction to International & Area Studies (2009-2011)
- Supervisor of teacher assistants, Intermediate Russian Language course (2006-2008)

University (Washington University in St. Louis)

- Arts & Sciences Faculty Council (2024-present)
- Faculty Leader, trip to Morocco as part of Ampersand program (first-year undergraduate course) “Safe Asylum” (Summer, 2025)
- Selection Committee, Poetry Translation Prize, sponsored by English Department and Program in Comparative Literature and Thought (Spring 2025)
- Student Conduct Board (2023-2025)
- WashU Fulbright Fellowship Committee, College of Arts & Sciences (2023; 2024)
- Co-host, Fulbright Scholars/Visiting Artists from Azerbaijan (2011), Kazakhstan (2013), Russia (2012; 2013) and with International Education Scholar Rescue Fund (2023)
- Four-Year Academic Adviser, College of Arts & Sciences
 - *as Assistant Dean*: 80-100 students/each semester (2006-2022)
 - *as full-time Senior Lecturer in Global Studies*: 30 seniors/each semester (2023)

- Interviewer/Committee, Special Majors, College of Arts & Sciences (2022)
- Progress Counselor (weekly meetings), College of Arts & Sciences (2007-2019)
- Discussion Facilitator, First-Year Reading Program (2007-2017)
- Mentor for Student Peer Adviser, College of Arts & Sciences (2012-2016)
- Academic Progress Committee, College of Arts & Sciences (2007-2011)
- Interviewer/Selection Committee, Mellon Mays Fellowship (2010)
- Committee for decision on WashU University Press, Office of Provost (2007)

Community (St. Louis)

- Coordinator for St. Louis viewings, *Art Seen Films* (2025)
- Volunteer Canvasser, Warren for President (2020)
- Coordinator for St. Louis viewings, *Stage Russia: Russian Theater in Cinemas* (2017-2019)
- Guest Speaker, Screening of *Exporting Raymond*, The Cinema Club, St Louis, MO, April 2011.
- Volunteer Usher, Center of Creative Arts, University City, MO (2008-2022)

Undergraduate Theses (Washington University in St. Louis)

Main Adviser

- Daria Locher, "The Assimilation of Russian Literary Phrases into Russian Oral History as Winged Words," honors thesis for International & Area Studies. Winner of Outstanding Honors Thesis in IAS (2020).
- Daniel Harlacher, Translation of and Commentary on Ivan Bunin's novella "At the Dacha," honors thesis for special major in Russian Studies (2012).

Reader/Defense Committee

- Patrick Boland, "Rape and the Destruction and Reconstruction of Gender Regimes in the Yugoslav wars: An Oral History Perspective," honors thesis for History, School of Continuing Education and Professional Studies (2024).
- Jerome Nagy Nashed, "Dmitri's Choice to Become a Knight of Faith Through Willing Suffering: A Kierkegaardian Analysis of the Aesthetic Christian in *The Brothers Karamazov*," honors thesis for Interdisciplinary Project in the Humanities (2022).
- Julia Arbanas, "Humpbacked Horses and Passionate Princesses: Character Dance as an Expression of Russian Imperialism," honors thesis for Performing Arts Department (2021).
- Hilah Kohen, "The 'Russian Craze' and the Silver Age: Missed Connections in the Anglophone Canon of Russian Literature," honors thesis for Comparative Literature (2018).
- Cassandra Klosterman, "The Jester and the King: Understanding the Role of the Nabokovian Textual Commentator," honors thesis for Interdisciplinary Project in the Humanities (2016).
- Max Schoenfeld, "You Will Never Understand: Examining the Unlikely Past, Present, and Future of the Satmar Hasidic Sect in Brooklyn and Beyond," honors thesis, International and Area Studies (2014).

- Lana Jaffe, “Voices of Democratization: Breaking the Silence in Contemporary Russian and South Korean Literature,” honors thesis for International & Area Studies (2011).

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Lectures/Media

“The Kreutzer Sonata: From Beethoven to Tolstoy to Janáček,” invited talk, First Mondays Concert Lectures Series with the Arianna String Quartet, KWMU Grand Center, March 2025.

"Artist-Global Theorist: A Dancer's Quest for World Peace in 1919 (and What We Can Learn from It Today)," invited talk, Atlas Week, Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO, April, 2024.

"Philosophy as Dance/Dance as Philosophy," guest lecture for course "Introduction to Comparative Arts," Washington University, St. Louis, MO, March, 2024.

“Forms and Shapes of Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature,” invited talk, Trinity Presbyterian Church, University City, MO, August 2019.

“Nijinsky/Nietzsche Connections Reexamined,” invited talk, Studies in Dance Seminar, Columbia University, New York, NY, January 2018.

Interviewed for documentary *Pushkin: Apostle of Freedom*, Christine List et al, June 2017.

“Vaslav Nijinsky’s *Feeling*, or How an Émigré Dancer Digested the Russian Literary Classics,” invited talk, Symposium in memory of Cathy Nepomnyashchy, Columbia University, New York, NY, April 2016.

“Шаг Нижинского: формы движения в дневнике танцовщика” [“Nijinsky’s Step: Forms of Movement in the Dancer’s Diary”], invited talk at international roundtable Тело и телесность в художественном тексте: к антропологии литературы [The Body and Corporeality in Literary Text: Towards an Anthropology of Literature], Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia, May 2014.

“Performance-Walks in the Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky,” invited talk, interdisciplinary workshop, “On the Move: Migration and Mobility in East and Central Europe and Eurasia,” Washington University, St. Louis, MO, April 2013.

“Pushkin’s ‘Little Tragedies’ and the Creation of a National Literary Family,” invited talk, the Center for Russian and East European Studies Lecture Series, Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA, November 1997.

Conference Papers

“Sibling Creativity,” International Conference for Central and East European Studies (ICCEES), London, UK, July 2025.

"Kairotic Force (*Sila*) in Nijinsky's Literary Choreography," Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) Annual Convention, Boston, MA, November 2024.

“Becoming Horse: How a Dancer’s *Feeling* Responds to War,” Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) Annual Convention, Philadelphia, PA, November 2023.

The French Magazine *L’Illustration* and the Russian and East European Avant-Gardes,” Central Slavic Conference, St. Louis, MO, November 2023.

“Journeys into the Archives: The Look of Nijinsky’s Manuscript,” paper presented at roundtable on Dance and Modernism in Russia and Eastern Europe, annual Central Slavic Conference (CSC), St Louis, MO, October 2018.

“More than Fig Leaves and Mad Leaps: Nijinsky in Nabokov’s *Lolita*,” paper presented at American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) Annual Convention, Austin, TX, January 2016.

“The Reincarnation of Madame Blavatsky,” paper presented at ASEEES Annual Convention, San Antonio, TX, November 2014.

“Swiss Footsteps: Rousseau, Tolstoy, Nijinsky,” paper presented at AATSEEL Annual Convention, Chicago, IL, January 2014.

“Cultural Ambassador of Russian/Eurasian Culture: The Nicholas Roerich Biographies,” paper presented at ASEEES National Convention, Boston, MA, November 2013.

“Reading the Rite Between the Lines: Nijinsky, Tolstoy’s Tree, and Climate Change,” paper presented at roundtable on “Igor Stravinsky, the Ballets Russes, and Russian Influence on Twentieth-century Dance and Music,” annual CSC, St. Louis, MO, November, 2013.

“The Curious Case of the Missing Landlady in Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*,” paper presented at annual CSC, St Louis, MO, November 2012.

“Teaching Russian Culture,” Regional AATSEEL, Annual Conference, St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO, October, 2008.

“Over Pushkin’s Dead Body: Post-Soviet Viewpoints,” paper presented at American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) National Convention, St Louis, MO, November 1999.

“Who Can Claim Griboedov’s Corpus?: The Rivalry Between Alexander Pushkin and Faddei Bulgarin,” paper presented at the Annual Regional Convention of AAASS, New York, NY, March 1999.

“Pushkin’s *Stone Guest*: A Monument to a Poet,” paper presented at AATSEEL Annual Convention, San Francisco, CA, December 1998.

“Pushkin’s *Mozart and Salieri* and the Cult of the Author,” paper presented at AATSEEL Annual Convention, Toronto, Canada, December 1997.

“Pushkin and Popular Myths of Royal Imposture,” paper presented at AATSEEL Annual Convention, Washington, DC, December 1996.

“Childhood Memory and Self-Assessment: Tatyana Tolstaya’s Merry-Go-Round,” paper presented at AATSEEL Annual Convention, Chicago, IL, December 1989.

“Fire and Dust: The Split-Self in the Stories of Tatyana Tolstaya,” paper presented at the Conference on Contemporary Soviet Literature, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, October 1989.

Discussant/Respondent

Celebration of Anca Parvulescu's and Manuela Boatcă's *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania Across Empires*, respondent, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, February 2023.

“The Literary Trial,” discussant, Annual Conference of Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), Chicago, IL, November 2017.

“Expanding Russian Biography,” discussant, American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL), Austin, TX, January 2016.

“Emotions in Russian Literature I,” discussant, Annual Conference of ASEEES, Washington DC, November 2016.

“Teaching Diversity in Slavic Studies,” roundtable participant, Central Slavic Conference (CSC), St. Louis, MO, 2016.

“Life after the PhD,” roundtable participant, annual CSC, St. Louis, MO, 2015.

“Russian Cultural Studies,” discussant, annual CSC, St. Louis, MO, 2011.

“Teaching Russian Literature to Non-Majors,” roundtable participant, annual CSC, St. Louis, MO, November 2010.

“Twentieth-Century Russian Prose,” discussant, the Ivy League Graduate Student Conference on Russian Studies, Yale University, New Haven, CT, April 1989.

Chair/Organizer

“Art, Memory, and War,” chair, CSC, St. Louis, MO, November 2024.

“Europe-Asia in Global Context,” chair, CSC, St. Louis, MO, November 2024.

“Intermedialities: Face, Body, Dance,” organizer, ASEEES National Conference panel, Philadelphia, PA, November, 2023.

“Dostoevsky and the Political Underground: New Perspectives,” chair, ASEEES National Conference panel, Washington DC, November 2016.

“Challenging Tolstoy,” co-organizer, AATSEEL National Conference panel, Chicago, IL, January, 2014.

“Mortality, Immortality, and the Feminine in Russian Visual Arts,” chair, CSC, St. Louis, MO, November 2011.

North American Pushkin Society, chair, AATSEEL National Conference, Chicago, IL, December 1999.

The Child in Russian Literature, chair, AATSEEL National Conference, New York, NY, December 1992.

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Independent tutor for TOEFL test/English composition, Austin, TX (2005-2006)

Evaluator for essay, Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), Austin, TX (2000)

Independent tutor, Russian language/English as Second Language, New York, NY (1990-1994)

Interpreter, Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, New York, NY (1992)

Teacher, Cambridge Schools (private language school), New York, NY (1988-1990)

Tour Guide, Russian Travel Bureau, New York, NY (1989)

Translator (as requested, including for text accompanying works of artist Ilya Kabakov), Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, Inc., New York, NY (1987-1988)

ESL Teacher, New York Association for New Americans, New York, NY (1987-1988)

Development Associate, The Tolstoy Foundation, New York, NY (1987-1988)

LANGUAGES

English (native); Russian (fluent); French (fluent); Latin (reading, college-level); German (basic reading for research)

CURRENT MEMBERSHIPS

Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES)

American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL)

Modern Language Association (MLA)

Modernist Studies Association (MSA)