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• Imagining the Geography of Odessa: Final Class Project

“Mapping Imagined Geographies of
Revolutionary Russia” (MAPRR)

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Howard University

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RUSS 101. Literature of Revolution.

Fall 2021

Level: Introduction to Russian Area Studies

Target population: Russian Language and
Literature Minors

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Imagining the Geography of Odessa: Final Class Project

This project will use the Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia database as the foundation for a final project for Russian 101: Literature of Revolution (maprr.iath.virginia.edu).

This class serves as an introduction to Russian literature and Russian Area Studies at Howard University. It also is an introductory course for Howard University's Russian language and literature minors.

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What is the context for this class and the assignment?

This unit will allow students the opportunity to integrate a digital archive into our students' studies of Russian literature and culture.

This assignment will focus on the overlay of Place Based Concepts within the context of Odessa as a port city and contact zone. As defined by Mary Louise Pratt in "Arts of the Contact Zone": "I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today. Eventually I will use the term to reconsider the models of community that many of us rely on in teaching and theorizing and that are under challenge today."

Students will have two options for research utilizing the Place Based Concepts data within the database within the context of Odessa as a contact zone. Definition of Place Based Concept (PBC) at: http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/place_based_concepts

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OPTION

1

Students will first look at the Place Based Concepts related to Odessa, as well as the writers in the database related to Odessa and their works represented in the database. They will create a hierarchy of the terms related to Odessa, and then compare the terms related to Odessa based writers within the MAPRR database and compare them to terms found in Isaac Babel's works. Odessa served as the nexus for a great diversity of writers. As a writer that negotiated the boundaries of Jewish, Russian, and Soviet identities, it will prove interesting to see how the Place Based Concept approach to analysis will operate in comparison to another author not within the database.

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OPTION 2

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Students will first look at the Place Based Concepts related to Odessa, as well as the writers in the database related to Odessa and their works represented in the database. They will create a hierarchy of the terms related to Odessa, and then compare the terms related to Odessa based writers within the MAPRR database and compare them to terms found in Akhmatova's works within the database. How does the seemingly apolitical aesthetics of the Acmeists come to help redefine Odessa under Akhamatova's works?

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Before
they get
to the
project...

Before they get to the final project using the MAPRR database, students will have been introduced to basic concepts regarding revolution and politics, as well as theories of geography as contact zones.

Course Goals (What do you want to achieve?)

1. Students will gain an understanding of the nature of revolution.
2. Students will learn to conduct high level research in the areas of humanities and social sciences.
3. Students will become familiar with leading research institutions in the Washington, D. C. area in the field of Eurasian studies.
4. Students will write critical analysis papers utilizing primary and secondary sources.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

- As part of the course work prior to this project, students will have been introduced to works that map Saint Petersburg as a site for revolutionary thought. They will also read materials that will introduce them to the history of Odessa as a port city contact zone.

DATE	TOPIC/NOTES	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK-1	St. Petersburg as a revolutionary city	<p>Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation." https://ia902609.us.archive.org/35/items/weber_max_1864_1920_politics_as_a_vocation/weber_max_1864_1920_politics_as_a_vocation.pdf</p> <p>Florinsky, Michael. "Russian Social and Political Thought, 1825-1855." <i>The Russian Review</i>, vol. 6, no. 2, 1947, pp. 77-85. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/125311.</p> <p>Evdokimova, Svetlana. "Sculptured History: Images of Imperial Power in the Literature and Culture of St. Petersburg (From Falconet to Shchegolev)." <i>The Russian Review</i>, vol. 65, no. 2, 2006, pp. 208-229. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3664398.</p> <p>Pushkin, <i>The Bronze Horseman</i>.</p> <p>Mirsky, D. S. "The Decembrists, (14 (26) December, 1825)." <i>The Slavonic Review</i>, vol. 4, no. 11, 1925, pp. 400-404. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4201971.</p> <p>Pushkin as a poet of blackness</p> <p>Catharine Theimer. <i>Nepomnyashchy Pushkin Review</i>.</p> <p>12-13 (Annual 2009) p97. Access through library.howard.edu, enter author name, follow link to e-copy</p>
WEEK-2	Peer-Review-Journal-analysis-due	<p>Gogol "The Nose." "The Overcoat"</p> <p>Belinsky's letter to Gogol.</p> <p>https://faculty.unlv.edu/pwerth/WebReader-422.pdf</p>
WEEK-5	Short-paper-#1-due	<p>STRAKHOVSKY, LEONID I. "The Silver Age of Russian Poetry: Symbolism and Acmeism." <i>Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes</i>, vol. 4, 1959, pp. 61-87. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40866067.</p> <p><i>Modern Russian Poetry</i>. https://ia802608.us.archive.org/20/items/modernrussianpoe00selv/modernrussianpoe00selv.pdf</p> <p><i>Red Cavalry Tales</i>, Isaac Babel. Available from the bookstore.</p>

<p>WEEK · 12 □</p>	<p>MAPRR WORKSHOP · WEEK 1 ¶ OPTION 1 ¶ Students will first look at the Place-Based Concepts related to Odessa, as well as the writers in the database related to Odessa and their works represented in the database. They will create a hierarchy of the terms related to Odessa, and then compare the terms related to Odessa-based writers within the MAPRR database and compare them to terms found in Isaac Babel's works. Odessa served as the nexus for a great diversity of writers. As a writer that negotiated the boundaries of Jewish, Russian, and Soviet identities, it will prove interesting to see how the Place-Based-Concept approach to analysis will operate in comparison to another author not within the database. ¶</p>	<p>MAPRR WORKSHOP -- ¶ Odessa as a site of revolution. ¶ Additional readings: ¶ 1) → "Arts of the Contact Zone." Author(s): Mary Louise Pratt Source: <i>Profession</i>, 1991, (1991), pp. 33-40 Published by: Modern Language Association Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25595469 ¶ 2) → "Odessa: Staple Trade and Urbanization in New Russia." Author(s): Patricia Herlihy Source: <i>Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas</i>, 1973, Neue Folge, Bd. 21, H. 2 (1973), pp. 184-195 Published by: Franz Steiner Verlag Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/41044735 ¶ 3) → Chapter Title: "City Through the Looking-Glass: Literary Odessa" Book Title: <i>Isaac Babel and the Self-Invention of Odessan Modernism</i> Book Author(s): Rebecca Jane Stanton Published by: Northwestern University Press. (2012) Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv47wd69.6 □</p>
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<p>WEEK · 13 □</p>	<p>¶ OPTION 2 ¶ Students will first look at the Place-Based Concepts related to Odessa, as well as the writers in the database related to Odessa and their works represented in the database. They will create a hierarchy of the terms related to Odessa, and then compare the terms related to Odessa-based writers within the MAPRR database and compare them to terms found in Akhmatova's works within the database. How does the seemingly apolitical aesthetics of the Acmeists come to help redefine Odessa under Akhmatova's works? . ¶ □</p>	<p>WORKING WITH MAPRR ¶ □</p>
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 - Where and how this lesson plan fits into the course syllabus?

This project will take the last three to four weeks of the semester. This will give students an opportunity to explore the MAPRR database, as well as determine which platform they want to use for their group project. Here is the MAPRR URL:

<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/>

Students will have the opportunity to use a broad range of digital platforms for their projects, including Omeka, Storymap, and others. Students could also propose and execute a podcast.

Depending on the size of the class, this assignment can be completed individually or as a group.

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 - Learning objectives and outcomes this lesson plan and assignment aim to achieve

This final project will serve as a capstone for all the skills developed in the course of the semester. It will:

- a) Demonstrate students' abilities to work with primary documents.
- b) Demonstrate students' abilities to integrate peer reviewed secondary sources into their analysis.
- c) Demonstrate students' abilities to contextualize the way that individuals, historical moments, and text come together as "contact zones." As Mary Louise Pratt stated: "...I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today..." (Pratt, p. 34)

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Framing Concepts

Traditional, Rational Legal, and Charismatic authority, as defined in “Politics as Vocation,” Max Weber

The nature of historical artistic monuments: Svetlana Evdokimova, “Sculptured History: Images of Imperial Power in the Literature and Culture of St. Petersburg (From Falconet to Shemiakin).”

The Decembrists as a generational movement, from D. S. Mirsky’s “The Decembrists.”

Marx and Engel’s “The Communist Manifesto.”

Carnavalesque, from Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*.

Contact zones, from Mary Louise Pratt’s “Arts of the Contact Zone.”

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MAPRR CONCEPT: AUTHOR

AUTHOR

While the concept of author seems simple at first glance, the idea of author and place become a way to identify the influence of historical moments. Students will start by analyzing the record of Anna Akhmatova, and her reflections of Petrograd as compared to the Saint Petersburg literature they will have read already.

Students will then move to study a few short stories by Isaak Babel', namely "How it was Done in Odessa," and compare Babel's perception of Odessa as a Jewish and Russian contact zone.

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MAPRR CONCEPT: PLACE BASED CONCEPT

PLACE BASED CONCEPTS

Students will study the nature of Place Based Concepts (http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/place_based_concepts) and compare how these concepts are reflected within the corpus of works already integrated in MAPRR, as well as the works they choose to analyze focusing on Odessa. A good term to start with would be “rejection of colonialism,” since it overlaps nicely with Babel’s representation of the Jewish community in Odessa.

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MAPRR CONCEPT: LOCATION

LOCATION

Using the “Location” page will probably prove most useful for students. The URL for MAPRR Locations:

<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/locations>

This will allow them to properly visualize the scope of the geography, as well as pointing out specific geographic features shared by different places represented by one author – in Akhmatova’s place, for example, Odessa as birthplace but Saint Petersburg as place of residence and production.

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MAPRR EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

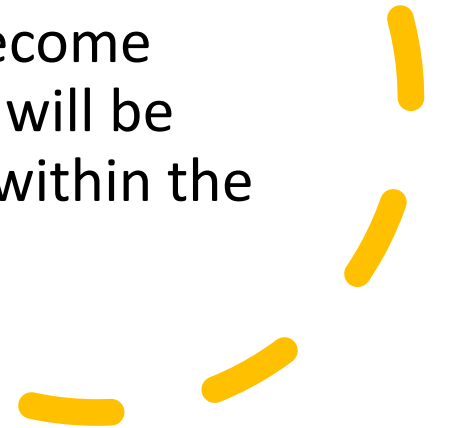
This assignment will focus on the overlay of Place Based Concepts within the context of Odessa as a port city and contact zone. As defined by Mary Louise Pratt in “Arts of the Contact Zone.” “I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today. Eventually I will use the term to reconsider the models of community that many of us rely on in teaching and theorizing and that are under challenge today.”

Students will have two options for research utilizing the Place Based Concepts data within the database within the context of Odessa as a contact zone.

Home Agents Authors Place Based Concepts PBC Components Works Locations Multivalent Markers
Analysis

MAPRR EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS (#1)

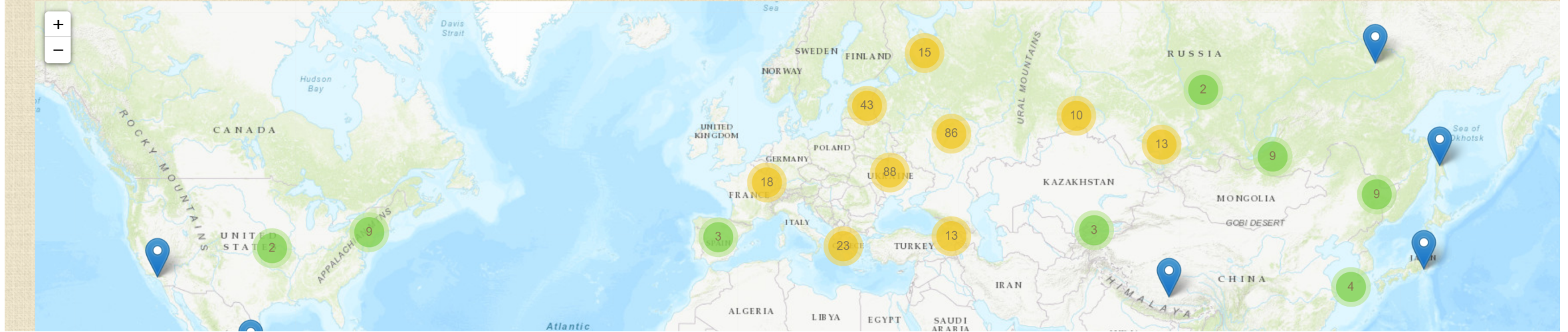
Visit the *Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia 1914-1922* website (<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu>) and become familiar with the website's layout. We will be focusing on the main identifiers used within the website:



Show all Locations

Select Categories to View

View Data for Specific Years 1914-1922



MAPRR EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS (#2)

- Start by exploring the actual physical map. Point out any particular geographical features of interest you find in any of the places shown in the map.
(<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/locations>)



MAPRR EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS (#3)

After exploring the tags on the map, explore some of the terms related to authors. What kind of works do they come from? Prose? Poetry? What kinds of keywords are easily identifiable? Rarely used words? Commonly used words? In Akhmatova's case, for instance, there is the poem «Это просто, это ясно...» (“This is Simple, This is Clear...” How simple and clear are the issues of which she speaks?). URL for Akhmatova's poem: <http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/works/12>

As you read the poem, think of whether she constructs a geographic hierarchy based on the terms she uses. Which terms seem most important/relevant/highlighted?

MAPRR EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS (#4)

Explore Anna Akhmatova's corpus enclosed in MAPRR. While we are focusing on «Это просто, это ясно...» feel free to explore some of the other poems at: <http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/works> Search for: Akhmatova.

English translations are available in Judith Hemschemeyer's *The Complete Poems of Anna Akhmatova*.

Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia
1914-1922

Home Agents Auth
Analysis

Anna Akhmatova

June 23, 1889 - March 5, 1966

Names

- Anna Andreevna Gorenko (birth)
- Anna Akhmatova (alternative, preferred)

Snac Record

<https://snaccooperative.org/view/26685504>

Associated Works

Authored

- [A ty teper' tiazhelyi i unyli...](#)
- [Angel, tri goda khranivskii menia](#)
- [Chem khuzhe etot vek...](#)
- [Chernyi son](#)
- [Drugoi golos](#)
- [Eto prosto, eto iasno...](#)

MAPRR EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS (#5)

- You can also further explore the use of individual terms by clicking on the hyperlinks included in the works cited in the database.

The screenshot shows a web interface with a header "View Information About This Work" and a dropdown menu "Display Textual Elements". Below the header, there is a list of works:

- PBC 95
 - [город](#) [mm56]
- PBC 263: NOSTALGIA FOR HOMELAND
 - [сторону](#) [mm353]
- PBC 37: DREAD OF THE FUTURE
 - [столице иноземной](#) [mm380]

To the right of the list is a text snippet in Russian. The words "город" and "сторону" are highlighted in orange, and "столице иноземной?" is highlighted in purple. A blue arrow points from the text "Notice the way that geographic terms have already been hyperlinked in colors." to the orange highlights, and an orange arrow points from the same text box to the purple highlight.

Это просто, это ясно,
Это всякому понятно,
Ты меня совсем не любишь,
Не полюбишь никогда.
Для чего же так тянуться
Мне к чужому человеку,
Для чего же каждый вечер
Мне молиться за тебя?
Для чего же, бросив друга
И кудрявого ребенка,
Бросив [город](#) мой любимый
И родную [сторону](#),
Чёрной нищенкой скиталюсь
По [столице иноземной](#)?
О, как весело мне думать,
Что тебя увижу я!
Лето 1917, Слепнёво

Notice the way that geographic terms have already been hyperlinked in colors.

MAPRR EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS (#6)

- Now that you have had an opportunity to explore some of the basic features of the MAPRR database, create a quick hierarchy of terms related to Odessa, and how they are reflected within the greater collection of works in the database...

Now, on to Odessa

Now you get to compare the Place Based Concepts that could relate to Odessa, and compare them to the concepts presented by Isaak Babel' in his short story "How It Was Done in Odessa."

STEP 1: Find all data related to Odessa that you can find in MAPRR. What major figures are related to the city? What works were written in the city? By the authors from the city?

Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia
1914-1922

[Home](#) [Agents](#) [Authors](#) [Place Based Concepts](#) [PBC Components](#) [Works](#) [Locations](#) [Multivalent Markers](#)
[Analysis](#)

Odessa



NOW PREPARE YOUR OWN PLACE BASED CATEGORIZATIONS...

After reading “How it Was Done in Odessa,” create your own category of Place Based Concepts brought forth by Babel’ in the story. Search here for PBC components that seem to fit Babel’s Odessa:

http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/pbc_components

Compare and contrast repeated terms. Semantically, as they being used in the same manner?

Prepare a digital exhibit using a platform of your choice to indicate your analysis to the semantic hierarchy of the Place Based Concepts you discover in your readings.

WHAT SHOULD MY EXHIBIT INCLUDE?



Your digital exhibit should include:

A) A basic list of primary documents related to Babel's life available in English.

B) A basic list of helpful secondary sources.

C) A description of the terms you reference in MAPRR, and their overlay with Babel's works.

D) How does Babel's experience and use of the terms coincide with or differ from the use seen in the MAPRR database? How would you list them under the Place Based Components categories?

E) What do Babel's linguistic usages contribute to our understanding of the period of Revolutionary Russia covered in the database?

AND LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, PREPARE AN EVALUATION THAT PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING EVALUATIONS...

What is using MAPRR helping you see that was relatively invisible before, particularly when it comes to the link of geography and literary production?

How does comparing Babel's work with other writers' works help to show different perspectives of this period?

What did you learn about the different ways that geography can become part of cultural and artistic memory, in this case about the port city of Odessa?

Image: 1930 Tourist poster,
<http://retours.eu/en/39-intourist-USSR-posters/>





WORLD-READINESS STANDARDS FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES

GOAL AREAS	STANDARDS		
COMMUNICATION Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes	Interpersonal Communication: Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.	Interpretive Communication: Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.	Presentational Communication: Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.
CULTURES Interact with cultural competence and understanding	Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.	Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.	
CONNECTIONS Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations	Making Connections: Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.	Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives: Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures.	
COMPARISONS Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence	Language Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.	Cultural Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.	
COMMUNITIES Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world	School and Global Communities: Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.	Lifelong Learning: Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.	

FINAL COMMENTS ON THE PROJECT...

- This assignment is designed to provide students the opportunity to work on a digital humanities project that will integrate the ACTFL World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages into a project that will also lead students through the basics of literary research and analysis. The project should prove fruitful and accessible for students that know Russian, as well as student that do not know Russian based on the quality translations available of Babel's and Akhmatova's work. The most interesting aspect will be seeing how students who do not know Russian figure out ways to negotiate other works in the MAPRR corpus.
- Chart from <https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/standards/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf>