

# Getting started with Russian

Lecturer: Sara Mazzucchelli

## Language

English

## Course description and objectives

This course is designed for absolute beginners and offers a foundational introduction to spoken and written Russian, along with some key elements of Russian cultural life.

Students will acquire basic language skills, such as reading and writing using the Cyrillic alphabet, and understanding and producing simple oral and written texts in everyday contexts. The course also offers an overview of selected topics in Russian culture. Throughout the course, short excerpts from literary and cultural works will be used to support cultural learning and introduce students to the language.

## Audience

The course is open exclusively to students enrolled in the **Master of Science** programs at Bocconi University and is part of the **Enhancing Experience** – Curricular Integrative Activities. Upon successful completion of the course (attendance of at least 75% of the scheduled hours and passing the final exam), students will earn 2 credits and receive an Open Badge, shareable across the web (LinkedIn) or personal CV.

## Prerequisites

A minimum entry level of Russian is not required.

## Duration

24 hours

## Teaching mode

This course will be only taught in person. Online mode will not be provided.

This course will be held exclusively in **synchronous, in-person sessions**. Neither online mode, nor video recordings will be provided.

NB: the **final test** of the course will take place on the **last day of class**. It will not be possible to take it remotely.

## Calendar

Lecture	Date	Time	Room
1	Wed 04/02/2026	18.15 - 19.45	12 (Sarfatti)
2	Fri 06/02/2026	14.45 - 16.15	41 (Sarfatti)
3	Fri 06/02/2026	16.30 - 18.00	41 (Sarfatti)
4	Fri 13/02/2026	14.45 - 16.15	41 (Sarfatti)
5	Fri 13/02/2026	16.30 - 18.00	41 (Sarfatti)
6	Fri 20/02/2026	14.45 - 16.15	41 (Sarfatti)
7	Fri 20/02/2026	16.30 - 18.00	41 (Sarfatti)
8	Fri 27/02/2026	14.45 - 16.15	41 (Sarfatti)
9	Wed 04/03/2026	18.15 - 19.45	12 (Sarfatti)
10	Fri 06/03/2026	14.45 - 16.15	41 (Sarfatti)
11	Tue 10/03/2026	18.15 - 19.45	12 (Sarfatti)
12	Fri 13/03/2026	14.45 - 16.15	41 (Sarfatti)

## Syllabus of the course

Unit	Communicative Skills and Functions	Linguistic contents	Cultural contents
I	Introducing oneself and talking about personal information. Short guided oral practice.	The alphabet; phonetic and orthographic rules: vowel reduction, hard and soft consonants.	The Cyrillic alphabet: origin and reforms.  Greetings and polite expressions.

	Developing phonetic awareness. Recognizing and writing printed Cyrillic letters.	Personal pronouns in the nominative case (subject forms).	Structure of Russian personal names (first name, patronymic, surname) and common diminutives.
II	Asking simple questions: Who is it? What is it? Professions. Do you speak Russian?	Regular verbs of the first and second conjugation: infinitive and present tense. Formation of interrogative and negative structures. Absence of the verb to be in the present tense.	Russian and other Slavic languages.  Use of formal and informal speech.
III	At the airport; Places. Numbers from 1 to 20.  Short guided writing exercises: composing simple written sentences.	Noun gender. Initial introduction to noun declension and grammatical cases.  Strong and weak endings; spelling rules: the Seven-Letter Rule. Plural forms of nouns.	Moscow: its origins, development, and spatial dimension.  Introduction to transliteration.
IV	Asking about locations; asking for and giving simple directions; expressing where someone/something is or was; simple statements of possession.	Prepositional case, endings and uses.  Possessive adjective мой (my).  The past tense of the verb to be; the verb to live.	Saint Petersburg: Peter the Great and the founding of the new capital.  Culture and everyday life: Russian grade system.

V	Food and drinks. Apologizing.  Short listening comprehension activities (audio/video with slow, natural speech).	The verbs to eat and to drink; distinction between animate and inanimate nouns. Accusative case of inanimate nouns: endings and usage.	Culture and everyday life: food.  Brief introduction to F. Dostoevsky.
VI	Describing weather and climate.  Asking: When?	Past tense of regular verbs: formation and use. Basic complements of time (including parts of the day).	Brief introduction to L. Tolstoy.  Cultural dimensions of space and time.

## Bibliography

A suggested bibliography will be provided at the beginning of the course.

## Available seats

This activity is limited to **110 participants** and reserved for students enrolled in the **Master of Science programs**. Registrations cannot be carried out once this number has been reached or after the registration period ends.