

Sample Student Evaluations for José Vergara
Russian 003: Intensive Third-Semester Russian
Fall 2019 / Fall 2018 / Fall 2017

“Professor Vergara is one of my favorite instructors ever. He is very good at explaining grammar and ensuring that we review key concepts throughout the class. His feedback was always understandable and useful. He also consciously looks for opportunities to show us how Russian connects to issues outside of the classroom as well as our other academic and personal interests. He has a good sense of humor and he knows how to balance a rigorous workload with an understanding approach to teaching. I really hope that he can stay at Swarthmore!”

“The textbook was good and introduced grammar in an effective manner. I like how it is divided into units centered around a particular relevant theme. That being said, I think that Professor Vergara's grammar handouts definitely provided more context than the textbook itself.”

“Professor Vergara talked to us about everything from Russian literature to culturally appropriate idioms. I liked this course because helped me to deepen my understanding of Russia as a place instead of just increasing my language skills.”

“The daily homework helped me to practice my understanding of the language in a low-stakes atmosphere. The quizzes ensured that I was staying on track in terms of learning vocabulary and verbs. The bimonthly exams synthesized and consolidated my knowledge of the chapter's content and enabled me to practice multiple modalities (listening, reading, writing, etcetera). The oral exams provided me with a good opportunity to see how my speaking has developed over the course of the semester. I really liked the video project – the other student and I had a lot of fun with it.”

“I want all of my friends to take Russian, and I told everyone I know to take Professor Vergara's Russian literature course in the spring (even though I sadly cannot take it). I looked forward to class every day, no matter how tired I was or what else happened to be going on in my life. This course is taught by excellent professors, and by the end I felt like I had genuinely improved my language skills and cultural awareness. I have no regrets about this class.”

“I’ve really liked incorporating authentic Russian-language materials into the class. Of course, I appreciate having the opportunity to intensively practice grammar, but it’s also interesting to learn more about how Russian extends to other parts of life (in songs, videos, poems, etcetera).”

“The teaching is *excellent*! I feel like my understanding of the language is improving, and our very small class size makes it easy to ask questions.”

“The teaching in this class is organized and satisfying.”

“This class is extremely effective and I have learned a lot so far. The essays have been very helpful in terms of contributing to my improvement. They allow me to incorporate the grammar and vocabulary that we have learned so far in a natural setting.”

“Thank you so much for teaching this class! I am very grateful for having the opportunity to be part of it.”

“His powerpoints always had dozens of slides of examples for us to go through and practice and there was never time in class that wasn’t spent doing an activity.”

“He always had materials and slides prepared and notified us of any changes to the schedule on the syllabus.”

“He almost always spoke in Russian and demanded that we did as well--he only spoke in English to clarify a point that we could not understand, but only after attempting to explain in Russian.”

“He personalizes lessons to make them interesting and also tailored to the needs of the students in the class. He also does not rely on the textbook to teach us, but takes the information in the textbook and presents it to us in a much more digestible form.”

“He makes sure everyone understands the material before moving on.”

“The textbook is very confusing and does not explain complex grammar well. But that is okay because Professor Vergara repackages the material to help us learn better.”

“We have an essay due for every unit, which started out being 400 words long and then progressed to 500 words. That doesn’t seem very long, but for intermediate Russian students, 500 word compositions are a huge challenge. At first I thought those expectations were too high, since it takes me so long to write those essays. But through the editing process we use, not to

mention writing the composition itself, I have definitely become a more proficient writer in Russian.”

“Playing games like Kahoots, pictionary, etc. were really fun. Also doing skits was useful for vocab development. And writing essays wasn’t very fun but is certainly useful.”

“Anything that involved coming up with original skits, because it really allows us to push at the extent of our understanding.”

“Yes [I would recommend this course to other students]! It is a relatively intensive course, but is not too overwhelming and has incredible language growth.”

“Conversation practice/mingling/open-ended questions/really anything involving talking, because so much of language is social and I find it much easier to learn a language when I get to hear how things sound when spoken/practice how sentences would be structured in conversation.”

“Activities that use authentic Russian language materials, games and conversation practice have been really helpful because they make learning the grammar less stressful and adding some fun and variety to our classroom”

“I’ve been pleased with learning new vocabulary and I have definitely regained some of my grammar and speaking that I lost over summer break.”

“Class taught almost entirely in Russian with very few English digressions.”

“Prof. Vergara is extremely organized and invested in students’ progress, and also finds ways to make the course engaging. I felt very motivated to learn throughout the semester because of Prof. Vergara.”

“Many of the longer assignments were difficult, but ultimately I learned to use Russian in new ways. The exams also made me REALLY learn the material.”