

Where Are They Now?
UF Russian Studies Alumni Profile

Alumnus: *Earl Joshua Hodil (class of '11)*

Concentration(s) at UF: (majors) *BA in Russian Studies and History*; (minor) *East-Central European Studies*

Current occupation: *PhD Candidate, History Department, Yale University*

Looking back, what aspects of your UF Russian studies proved particularly useful?

Simply put, learning Russian. I would not be able to read my source material, keep up with scholarly literature, work in the archives, or interact with my Russian colleagues without the invaluable experience I received in my Russian classes at UF. The Russian program at UF also provided me my first opportunity to visit Russia (UF in Moscow, Summer 2010). It was an indescribable experience, which allowed me to walk where the very historical figures who intrigued me so much once lived and breathed. That trip, along with the support of my Russian professors throughout my time in Gainesville, inspired me to pursue my studies further.

With regard to your pursuit of Russian at UF, is there anything you didn't take or get that would have been useful? *I only wish I had been able to study in Russia itself a little longer while I was an undergraduate. I feel that may have given me an even stronger language base on which to build. Otherwise, I have been more than satisfied with my time studying Russian at UF.*

What did you do after you graduated? *I went on to receive an MA in European and Russian studies at Yale University and I am currently working on my PhD, also at Yale. My dissertation covers the relations between Russia and Denmark during the reign of Mikhail Romanov in the Seventeenth Century. I had always loved history, but studying Russia, its language, its literature, and its culture at UF steered me towards pursuing Russian history as a career in particular.*

Are you still using your Russian? *Absolutely! I read Russian nearly every day, including both original source materials from the Russian archives and secondary literature. Not to mention that I must speak Russian daily to navigate the archive administration and Moscow itself (as I am currently on a research year there).*

What advice might you have for Russian studies students considering Russian as a major? *It is well worth it, though it is necessary to put in the effort. Studying a foreign language requires a great deal of determination, bordering on stubbornness. So put in the hours both inside and outside the classroom. Consume the language as frequently as possible. Read books, newspapers, online articles, or whatever you can find in Russian. Watch Russian TV or movies if you can access them, or follow Russian news online (though don't believe everything you hear). And most importantly, speak Russian as much as you can outside of the classroom. Practice is necessary for improvement.*

What advice might you have for Russian studies students on the verge of graduation? *Russian is a valuable language for a variety of careers. I chose to continue in the academic world, but opportunities exist in business, in government, in NGO work, and elsewhere for those who can speak Russian.*

In a sentence or two, reflect on your experiences studying Russian at UF and its impact on you personally and/or professionally. *I went into my first Russian class just looking to fulfill the foreign language requirement with something a little off the beaten path (that, and my grandfather had been telling me for years to read War and Peace and The Brothers Karamazov, so I figured why not learn a little Russian while I did). Ten years later, I am still studying this country, which was so brilliantly unveiled to me by the Russian department at UF. The faculty inspired me in this passion with their deeply interesting courses and their persistent, but kind, instruction.*

If their interests or trajectories correspond to yours, would you be willing to help individual students with career, post-graduate, and/or networking questions? *Absolutely.*