

Title: Teaching Intercultural Competency Beyond Language at the Advanced Level
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My course “Working in Russia, Dealing with Russians” was designed to advance students’ understanding of the culture of everyday life in Russia. This is accomplished in part by immersing them in the Russian mindset with the help of Viktoria Tokareva’s novella *Pervaya Popytka*. By closely and deliberately examining the many allusions Tokareva makes to Russian culture, history, and behavior, students are able to answer a broad array of questions that get at key aspects of Russian identity. For example, why is Russian friendship different? Why are Russians superstitious and negligent? How did Russian negligence help Russians survive on 9/11 in New York? Why do Russians and Americans relax and grieve differently? Why are Russians suspicious when Americans smile? In this presentation, I will describe how the course works and the ways in which I use cultural realia to prepare students to decipher the allusions they encounter in the text. I will also show all the materials that I use, including news clips from different decades from Leonid Parfenov’s series *Namedni*, poems, and excerpts from classical Russian literature and fairy tales, all of which are alluded to in the text. I will also share assignments and discuss how I assess gains in student learning and intercultural competency.

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