

Title: New Materials for Advanced Russian Language and Culture through Song: A Demonstration

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At last year's conference, the author laid out principles underlying new, advanced internet-based course materials in language and culture through the prism of song, being developed at Georgia Tech in the context of a broader project of the author's design encompassing Russian, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese. The project is currently in the final year of a three-year U.S. DoE International Research and Studies grant. The materials, which will be freely disseminated, are devoted to exploiting the full potential of song as a focal point for teaching language and culture: songs are compact, authentic and dense with cultural and linguistic information. Not only do songs illustrate the culture of a given speech community, but they also reflect the emotions, biases and language of that community. They compel students to listen and inspire them to use their voices. Materials are structured around a carefully chosen corpus of songs, richly annotated, and supplied with a full pedagogical apparatus and broad range of contextual content presented in various media, in order to spur both focused linguistic development and the assimilation of expanding tracts of deep cultural knowledge. Computer delivery has the potential to address the vexing mix of levels and backgrounds in the typical advanced undergraduate content-based language classroom: a rich web of content and context surrounding the annotated main corpus of songs allows for active participation by students with minimal, classroom-only preparation and deep, but guided exploration of cultural context on the part of more proficient reader-listeners, who have spent significant time in country. In this year's presentation, the author will focus on a demonstration of materials, as well as the functionality of the computer interface and designer "backside." Those interested in joining a pilot of course materials in spring 2012 can contact the presenter.

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