

Teachers of Russian and East European Studies



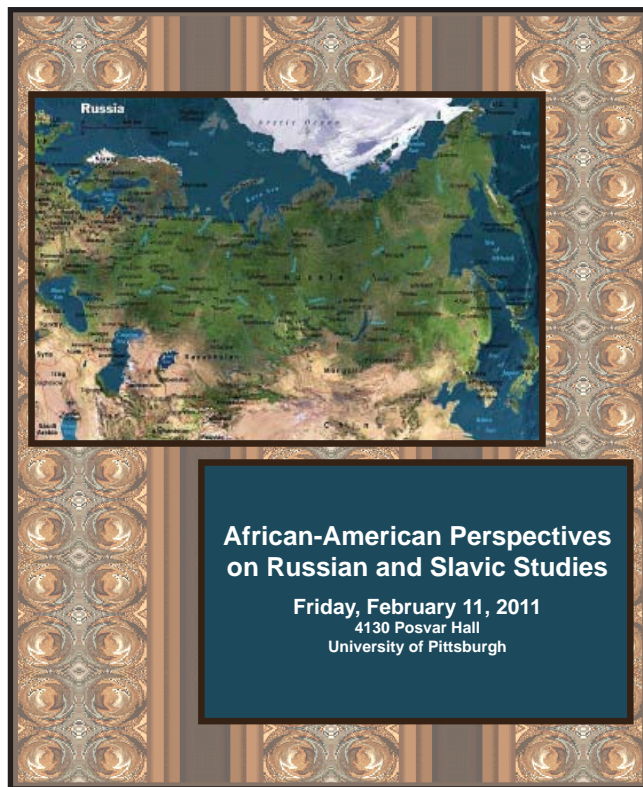
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Supporting African-American Students of Russian Studies

In February 2011, the outreach program of the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Russian and East European Studies (REES) presented two special events focusing on African-American students and scholars in international studies. The first event, "**International Connections: The Path to Your Global Future**," is an annual program organized collaboratively by all of Pitt's area studies centers, including REES. This year it was also co-sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh. The International Connections program

is designed to inform minority students from high schools throughout the Pittsburgh region of the range of international studies and study abroad options that are available to them in college, and of the many internationally oriented career opportunities that these experiences can help to open to them in the future. REES arranged for Jennifer Wilson, a doctoral student from Princeton University, to speak at International Connections about her experiences with learning the Russian language, conducting research on Russian literature, and traveling in Russia as an African-American student.



The second event held this February was a day-long symposium on "**African-American Perspectives on Russian and Slavic Studies**." The symposium brought together a diverse group of approximately 40 university and K-12 faculty and administrators, graduate and undergraduate students, film and journalism professionals, and current and former students of Russian from Pittsburgh Schenley High School to discuss the problem of underrepresentation of African-Americans in the field of Russian and Slavic studies. Throughout the day, participants explored the experiences of African-Americans who have studied, taught and conducted research in the former Soviet Union and/or focusing on Slavic languages, literatures and cultures. Presentations, roundtable discussions and a film screening focused on the challenges of living, studying and traveling as part of an

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Supporting African-American Students of Russian Studies (cont'd)

underrepresented minority in a region of the world which has had an uneasy relationship with racial diversity.

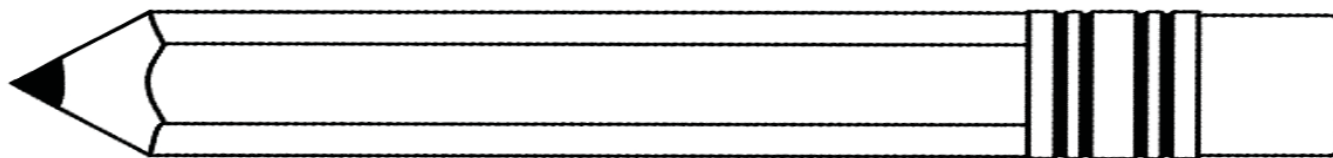
The “African-American Perspectives” symposium was organized by REES Assistant Director/Outreach Coordinator Gina Peirce, REES Associate Director Eileen O’Malley, and Pittsburgh Schenley High School language teacher and International Baccalaureate program coordinator Devin Browne, who has taught Russian to classes of predominantly African-American students in Schenley’s IB program for the past three years. Other co-sponsors included Pitt’s Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, African Studies Program, Cultural Studies Program, Film Studies Program, Global Studies Center, Institute for International Studies in Education, School of Arts and Sciences, and University Center for International Studies, as well as the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES).

Faculty and students from 14 higher education institutions across the country were represented at the symposium, as well as two scholarly organizations (ASEEES and American Councils on International Education ACTR/ACCELS), a Fulbright program alumnus whose participation was sponsored by the Institute of International Education, the Pittsburgh and Baltimore Public Schools and the private Kiski School. Participants were exposed to multiple interdisciplinary perspectives on the historical, social, and economic situation of racial minorities in the former Soviet Union, which will inform and enrich their future research. In addition, the faculty members in attendance increased their awareness of the problems confronted by minority students

in Russian and Slavic studies, which will enable them to more effectively support such students in pursuing their scholarly endeavors.

Also as a direct result of the “African-American Perspectives” symposium, the new **Association for Students and Teachers of Color in Slavic Studies (STC)** was formed by symposium attendees and successfully applied for the status of an ASEEES-affiliated organization, with plans to hold an initial meeting at the November 2011 ASEEES conference in Washington, DC. The Association’s mission statement declares that the group is “dedicated to better connecting and expanding the network of minority scholars working in the profession. The Association is committed to improving general understanding of the unique challenges faced by students and educators of color studying, teaching, and conducting research in and about the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Association seeks to serve as a platform for discussions of race and ethnicity in the region.” It is anticipated that this group will be an important addition to ASEEES, which until now has not had an established forum for exploration of such issues.

STC has started a listserv and Facebook page to recruit new members and maintain an ongoing dialogue on questions of race and ethnicity in the Russian and East European world region and the Slavic studies profession. REES looks forward to continuing to work with this unique initiative in upcoming years. For more information, please contact Gina Peirce at gbpeirce@pitt.edu.



Upcoming Events



HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' WORKSHOP: "ISLAM AND CULTURE," JUNE 14

On Tuesday, June 14, 2011 from 4:30–8:30 p.m., REES and the University of Pittsburgh's other area studies centers will present a professional development workshop for high school teachers on the theme of **"Islam and Culture around the World."** Dr. Christina Michelmores of Chatham College will give an introductory talk on the historical development of Islam as a faith: how interpretations of that faith created ways of life associated with religion; how imperialism, modernity and inefficient governments challenged those ways of life; and how Muslims have met those challenges with a variety of responses —traditionalist, reformist, radical and reactionary. The workshop will also feature presentations by teachers who participated in a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad program in Egypt through Pitt's Global Studies Center in 2009, and by a panel of international Pitt graduate students who will discuss the role of Islam in the cultures of their native countries. For more information, or to register for this workshop, please contact Gina Peirce at (412) 648-2290 or gpeirce@pitt.edu.

INTENSIVE SUMMER 2011 LANGUAGE CLASSES AT PITT

The University of Pittsburgh's **Slavic and East European Summer Language Institute (SLI)** offers intensive courses in a variety of languages each summer. These courses, which attract students from colleges and universities all over the country, are also open to qualified high school students and to adult learners. Classes meet on Monday through Friday for five hours per day, and also include an extensive cultural program giving students hands-on exposure to the music, dances, and cooking of the country whose language they are learning, as well as films and lectures on cultural topics. Most classes are taught by native speakers of the language. Each course covers the equivalent of a full academic year of college-level language study. Students who complete an SLI course receive six to ten University of Pittsburgh credits.

In Summer 2011, four levels of Russian language will be offered at Pitt from June 6–July 29. Courses will also be offered in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Polish, Slovak, and Turkish from June 6–July 15. Some courses include optional study abroad components. For more information or to request an application form, please contact Christine Metil at (412) 624-5906 or slavic@pitt.edu, or download the form at www.slavic.pitt.edu/sli. Information on Summer 2012 courses will be available on this site in the fall of 2011.



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Upcoming Events (cont'd)

INTERNATIONAL WEEK 2011

The University of Pittsburgh's annual International Week includes a wide variety of educational and cultural offerings such as lectures, discussions, films, music, dance, arts and crafts, and more, featuring all regions of the world. International Week 2011 will take place on September 23–30. Check www.ucis.pitt.edu/global/intlweek.shtml throughout the summer for updates on the schedule of International Week events. Most events are free and open to the public.

PITT MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE 2011

The 15th annual Pitt Model United Nations conference on Monday, November 7, 2011 will provide a stimulating and competitive environment to challenge teams of high school students on an array of internationally provocative issues. The Model UN is a simulation of the sessions of the real United Nations, and is organized by the University of Pittsburgh's international studies centers, Citizens for Global Solutions Pittsburgh, the United Nations Association of Pittsburgh, and Pitt's student Model UN Club. Participating students are able to apply their prior research and studies in a "real-world" context and practice diplomacy, negotiation and resolution writing as they assume the roles of UN delegates. If your school would like to send a team to our Model UN, be sure to register as soon as possible, since this popular event fills up fast! For more information, please visit the Pitt Model United Nations homepage at <http://www.pitt.edu/~modelun>, or contact Luz Amanda Hank at (412) 648-7394 or modelun@pitt.edu.

As in past years, we will offer on-site workshops at individual schools to assist you with preparing your students to participate in Model UN. For more information, please contact Dan Giovanelli at (412) 471-7852 or dan@globalsolutionspgh.org.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM 2012

In Spring 2012, REES will present its 11th annual regional Undergraduate Research Symposium. This event provides an opportunity for undergraduate

students to present their own research papers in an environment similar to that of a graduate-level conference. At the conclusion of the event, winners are selected to receive cash awards based on the quality of their research papers and presentations, as determined by panels of faculty and graduate student judges.

Participants in the 10th annual Symposium on March 25, 2011 included a total of 10 students from Dickinson College, the University of Pittsburgh, and Washington and Jefferson College. Student presentations focused on a variety of topics related to Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, such as: "Serbia: From Tumult to Transition", "Monogoroda: Hope through the Haze?", and "Kandinsky and Scriabin: A Cross-Examination and Analysis of the Synaesthetic Effect on Art." The three winning papers were subsequently published on the Symposium website, www.ucis.pitt.edu/ursymposium.



Participants in the 2011 Undergraduate Research Symposium

Applications to participate in the 2012 Undergraduate Research Symposium will be posted this fall on the event website with a deadline in January. The event will again be open to students from higher educational institutions throughout the Western Pennsylvania/West Virginia/Eastern Ohio area and beyond. We would like to encourage all faculty members whose undergraduate courses on Russia and/or Eastern Europe include research paper assignments to inform their students of the opportunity to participate in the Symposium at Pitt. For more information, please contact Gina Peirce at (412) 648-2290 or gbpeirce@pitt.edu.

The events described in this section are supported by the Title VI National Resource Center program of the U.S. Department of Education.

Past Events

GOVERNOR'S HONORS ACADEMY

REES worked with Professor Erich Lippman of Bethany College's Department of History to arrange two cultural presentations for a group of high school students attending the West Virginia Governor's Honors Academy, held on Bethany's campus in July 2010. Professor Anna Nisnevich, a REES-affiliated faculty member in Pitt's Department of Music, gave a presentation on Russian classical music and opera. Recent REES/Pitt Law School alumna Aleksandra Williams put together a presentation on several aspects of Russian folk culture, including music, traditional costumes and fairy tales. Both presentations enriched the classroom experience of the Academy students, who were taking a course on Russian culture from Professor Lippman, by providing hands-on exposure to distinctive elements of the culture they were studying. (See photos on page 7).



Above: REES alumna Barбора Nemcova gives a presentation on Czech children's tales at the Carnegie Library's 'Passport to the Czech Republic and Slovakia' program, March 2011; below: (L to R) Tina Zubak, Susan Stafura, and Lavender Woolstrum present various aspects of Czech and Slovak culture at the 'Passport' program.

PASSPORT TO CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA

In March 2011, REES worked with the staff of the Children's Department of the Carnegie Library in Oakland to present a program for elementary school-aged children, "Passport to the Czech Republic and Slovakia." This event included demonstrations of folk dancing, songs, accordion playing, traditional costumes, an introduction to basic phrases in Czech and Slovak, Czech children's stories, homemade pastries, and more. It was the second program in the library's "Passport to the World" series on which REES had collaborated, following the equally successful "Passport to Russia" program held in December 2009.



Teacher Services Through the REES Outreach Program

REES's outreach program offers expert speakers free of charge to Pittsburgh area schools, as well as other community organizations. School visitors may speak on a wide variety of topics related to Eastern Europe, Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union, including language, culture, current issues and the arts. Lessons on the Russian alphabet and basic phrases, folk dancing, Ukrainian egg decorating, etc. are available. A school visit may be requested by contacting REES outreach coordinator Gina Peirce at (412) 648-2290 or gbpeirce@pitt.edu.

REES also maintains a **lending library** of educational resources for K-12 and college-level teachers. Available materials include books, maps, videos, audio CDs, and teachers' curriculum guides covering all countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. To view the current list of materials, please visit www.ucis.pitt.edu/crees/k12_resources.html, or contact Gina Peirce to have a hard copy of the resource directory mailed to you. Materials are lent to educators free of charge for two-week periods, and may be renewed. Most materials are available for lending by mail.

Our resource collection includes eleven **curriculum guides** to those Central and East European nations that either already became members of the European Union, or are on a path to EU membership in upcoming years. Guides are available on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. All of the guides may be viewed, printed or downloaded free of charge on the "Outreach World" website at www.outreachworld.org/center.asp?centerid=130. (If you prefer to receive hard copies of one or more of the guides by mail, please contact Gina Peirce.) The "Outreach World" website also is a valuable



Curriculum guides to Central and East European members and prospective members of the European Union, available for download on the Outreach World website (see address below).

source of downloadable educational resources developed by international studies programs at universities throughout the country. You can search these resources at www.outreachworld.org/searchresources.asp.

The REES curriculum guides provide an overview of the history and current political situation of the new and soon-to-be European Union member countries, as well as various cultural topics such as national customs, holidays, cuisine, music, and educational systems. They include lists of additional resources to consult for more in-depth information on particular subjects. The guides are organized into sections of approximately one to five pages, each of which can be used independently of the rest, so that educators may select specific sections to print for use as handouts in class. While primarily designed for use in high school social studies and world culture classes, the guides are also appropriate for use in introductory college-level courses, and may be particularly useful for preparing students to study abroad.

Teacher Services Through the REES Outreach Program

In addition, REES works together with the African, Asian, European Union, Global, International Business, and Latin American Studies programs at the University of Pittsburgh to organize annual professional development workshops on teaching international studies, as well as events for secondary school students such as Model United Nations and international career days (please see “Upcoming Events” for more information).

If you would like to be added to the main **REES mailing list** and receive the monthly calendar of REES activities, including weekly lectures on the Pitt campus, film screenings and other special community events, please contact the Center for Russian and East European Studies at (412) 648-7407 or crees@pitt.edu. If you are not currently on the **K-12 teachers' mailing list**, and would like to be added to this list to receive the TREES newsletter and event announcements for K-12 teachers and students, please contact Gina Peirce at (412) 648-2290 or gbpeirce@pitt.edu.

The REES School Visits Program, resource lending library, professional development workshops and other outreach events are supported by the Title VI National Resource Center program of the U.S. Department of Education.



Above: Viktoria Plokhovskaya, Aleksandra Williams, and Aleksandra's daughter Tatiana perform a Russian song for students in the West Virginia Governor's Honors Academy; below: Tatiana shows a book of Russian tales to students attending the Academy.



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Home page:

<http://www.slavic.pitt.edu/>

Slavic film collection directory:

<http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/video/>

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